WITHDRAWN

On the Margins of

OLD BOOKS

ON THE MARGINS OF OLD BOOKS.

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Translated By

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PQ
2337
L3S8
1929

Published By

COWARD-McCANN, INC.

NEW YORK, 1929.

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Printed in the United States of America

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Dame de mes pensées, dit-il, eussé-je pu croire que vous daignassiez souhaiter ma présence, et que cette joie me fût octroyée de contempler de près votre céleste beauté?

On the Margins of Old Books

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PREFACE

OLD BOOKS—An Address to the French Academy

GENTLEMEN:

It seems to me that all collectors—unless the object of the mania is decidedly absurd—are worthy of respect to a certain degree. They combat and retard at one point universal and inevitable destruction. They save and preserve the past—and a selected past.

But I believe that among them those who collect old books are particularly inspired. For they preserve not only—as do other collectors—an object of art (here the binding, if it is beautiful, is a work of the brain as well as the hand); they preserve in addition what was through the printed word the direct expression of the mind. They often, by the fortunate reunion of these three things—an antique armorial binding, an important text, and an illustrious period, possess and safeguard historical fragments trebly alive.

Some years ago there appeared for sale the copy bearing the arms of Richelieu and annotated by him, of the *Sentiments de l'Académie sur le Cid;* at another time, the copy of *Esther* presented by Racine to Madame de Maintenon with an autograph dedication. Don't exclaim, "What has that to do with us?" What well-balanced soul, and as a consequence of that, respectful to the Academy, what soul loyal to Racine and

attracted by the pretty adventure of Saint Cyr can remain cool before these two books, thinking of their owners, their givers, their readers, and those hands that held the goose quill above their pages and made the scratching inscriptions two hundred seventy and two hundred twenty years ago?

But these are exceptional joys for opulent amateurs. There are more accessible treasures not without their charm:—for example, a good old classic, contemporary with its author, in good condition, with generous margins and original binding—morocco, perhaps.

Certainly, I mean no disrespect to the gorgeous bindings of today. They are extremely ingenious. They are often true little pictures in mosaics. They bear lilies, irises, thistles, profiles of women, and death's heads. The workmanship is better than it ever was. Even when the ornamentation consists only of filets, stamps, or plaques, they are so clear, so exact, that the toolers of other years could never hope to equal them.

But—may I say it?—one of the details that appeals to me in the charming designs of ancient bindings is that they are not always geometrically exact. Always some trembling or some hesitation of the lines recalls to us and shows to us the living moving hand of the craftsman who executed them. Add to this the fact that time has delicately toned the gold and given to the leathers, especially to the reds and greens, tints of a softness, of a richness, of a half-vanished sumptuousness, of a warmth, and, if I may so describe it, of an unction that no artifice knows how to imitate.

And this is not all. The text of these old books seems better in them than in a modern reprinting. I

am thinking here, above all, of certain texts of the second rank, curious, which at first appeared beautiful, which still have their price, but of which the perusal in a modern edition is rather laborious. Well, read them in a volume on paper and in types of their authors' times, and the reading becomes easy. It is as though the appearance and the feel of the ancient book induces in you a receptive mood of the former generations for whom these moral tales and stories were written. The expressions, today old-fashioned, surprise you less; you enter more easily into the kind of affectation or pedantry proper to the age in which the tome was published. I shall go further:—I believe that the great writers themselves gain by being read in the editions of their times.

Then, what of the first edition—the original!

Here a common-sensed man may say, "I can understand that one may hunt old binding exactly as he hunts old china. Besides, from old bindings can be made rather pretty blotter pads. But what is so exciting about an original edition? In what does the first edition of a classic differ from the second or the third and the others, except for a date on the title page? And does this difference justify the jumps in price which sometimes amount to several hundred francs?"

Gentlemen, these are vain phrases! I hope that if you held in your hands the original edition of the *Cid*, *Andromaque*, or *L'Ecole des Femmes*, you would feel quite otherwise. Surely, you would meditate, and say to yourself:

"So, these characters printed on these pages are the first—the first!—that gave to the eye this masterpiece

of human genius. These first for Corneille, Racine, Molière showed them their thoughts become visible and detached from themselves. Before these, the works existed only on written sheets that have now disappeared, or behind the brows of their authors. Here I clasp the first material, public, and lasting impression. I am present, so to speak, at their birth, an auspicious moment of literary history."

These old leaves are full of life. The day before, they were not known. Then they appeared suddenly in their modest and solid dress of skin or vellum in the shop of Barbin at the Signe de la Croix, or of Riboux at the Image Saint Louis, on the steps of Sainte Chappelle. Some citizen full of good will, some gentleman, or some lady—dressed as we still see them on the stage in revivals—caught sight on the stall of the new volume and bought it for some thirty sous. Madame de Sévigné perhaps or Madame de Lafayette sent her laquey for it, or passing descended from her chair or her carriage and after having exchanged with Barbin some pleasant remarks bought it herself—a copy like the one I hold, perhaps this very one—then having regained her seat, she began to page through the volume while she waited in one of those street jams described by Despréaux.

But, Gentlemen, for the person really afflicted the original popular edition never satisfies. Formerly, as you know, printing a book, even a small one, took several months. There was no hurry. The working printers, for the most part, were rather ignorant. In addition, the authors themselves were not very strict in the correction of their proof sheets; they even turned

this work over to the publisher. So first, several copies were run off. The author scanned them, found errors, and had them corrected in the remainder of the edition.

You are going to say, "These corrected copies are worth more then; these are the ones to own." And you repeat the easy jokes about the amateur who buys at a huge price, when he can find it, the copy without the sheet of errata, "the copy before the corrections."

Gentlemen, the mania of this amateur is perhaps not so absurd. He tells himself that in finding the uncorrected copy he is making a little greater conquest of the past. He is coming a little closer still to that moving moment when the thought of the author was expressed for the first time in typographical characters.

I shall not speak of the cases in which important and significant corrections and suppressions were made during the printing, so that the first copies are really more interesting than the others, as for instance in the *Pensées* of Pascal or the *Don Juan* of Molière. Here, my lover of copies before errata has no further need of justification.

But the common-sensed man resumes: "These primitive and complete texts can be obtained at least cheaper in a modern edition. Your delights, in sum, are the delights of imagination merely."

Assuredly. But you will grant me that they are innocent, even noble. They imply certain most laudable sentiments or dispositions: respect, curiosity, sympathy. And if these are delights of the imagination, the person who creates them is in his way a modest inventor of chaste pleasures—a kind of poet.

And finally, suppose that his fervor grows cold some

day, it will not have entirely vanished—if he takes the trouble to read what he has collected. These tomes, that he sought mainly because of their dates or their dress, contain matter valuable for itself; and thus the rarest collection may in addition be the most substantial library.

I do not wish to add the banal paradox that the late comers have said nothing new, that everything has been said over and over again since man was man. True, the same things have always been said; but this is not completely true. It is quite possible that several of the nineteenth century writers had more supple and extensive intellects than did the classic authors, and it is possible that others had a more delicate sensitiveness. In any case, I believe that they markedly developed, enriched, and shaded the contents of the books of former times. But it is quite probable that with Corneille, Racine, Molière, La Fontaine, with Rabelais, Montaigne, Descartes, Pascal, Bossuet, La Bruyère, a reader had all the essential comments on human nature, on man, religious, political, and social. And it must be admitted that these reflections, these descriptions, even these commonplaces had there for the first time an almost perfect expression, preserved a color, a savor, a plenitude, a grace never recovered since. It is not dishonorable to be pleased by them. Moreover, it is delicious to return to them, even after long intervals of indulgence among the embellishments added to these primitive and essential treasures by recent ages.

And then there is the complete pleasure of tasting, in the designs and the tones of the binding smoothed and polished by so many hands, in the tint and quality

of the paper, in the date of the permission of the king, in the form of the types, in the sentiments or the thoughts that the characters express to the eye, in the turn even of the rhythm and accent of these thoughts and sentiments—and in all this at one time—the mysterious charm of the past.

I know well that only the past exists. What we call the present is merely the most recent past. But, naturally, it is of the more remote past that I am speaking.

Puissant charm upon disabused and weary spirits! There one finds repose. Only of the past are we able to form for ourselves precise and consistent images. Even when we dream of the future, we construct it as well as we can on the past. In reality, the future is only shadows and fear. Whenever I try to picture for myself what the world will be in one hundred years, in a thousand years, I feel a horrible uneasiness, an anger at my inability to know, a despair for having been born too soon, a terror before the unknown. Thus, not being able to foresee the future, but trying to dream it, the mind remains sterile and impotent. All the utopias, all the descriptions of Arcadia, Atlantis, of Eldorado, even the most recent, contain nothing intoxicating, so powerless are we to imagine even happiness.

But to dream of the past—not as a presumptuous historian to remold it according to the passions and imbecilities of the present—but to dream in the past for nothing, for pleasure, this is charming and easy. Far from fleeing, the past offers itself to us. It is our all; from it were we made. To dream in the past—above all in the past of France—is to awaken all the

men we bear in ourselves, to prolong our lives indefinitely beyond the cradle; it is to rejoice at feeling in our bodies roots so deep, and at having already lived so long before we saw the light.

Do not urge the abominations that may be met among all the mildness of the past. They have a great advantage over those of the present—they exist no longer. Unless we wish to, we need not hate anything in the past, since we are free to see only the beautiful and touching details, and to consider them only under their actual appearance. For this reason we see the least pious persons collect pious primitives, articles of the sacristy, and holy objects of the past.

In brief, from the past, one chooses. In the present, one may not choose. One is forced to suffer it as it is. What a refuge, what a marvelous retreat, at certain periods, to live with the dead and all their works—choosing them as we will!

And now, Gentlemen, do not reproach me with being a prophet of the past, thereby enervating your activities. The sentiment I describe is not very infectious and imperils nothing. Be reassured; there will always be enough men to live in the present, to build firmly there, to invade the future, and proclaim its magnificence. That has permitted me to abandon myself without scruple to these dreams of the past that, asleep itself, invites others to sleep as well.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE ILIAD

THERSITES

HE was the ugliest man that had ever appeared before Troy. He was lop-sided, club-footed, hunch-backed, with a pointed skull on which straggled a few hairs. With his sharp voice he braved Agamemnon.

"Atrides, your tents are full of plunder and beautiful maidens that we give you first of all when we take a city. What more do you want?"

Then turning to the soldiers: "Cowards! Women of Achæa—not men of Achæa! Let us go back to our dwellings with the ships. Let us leave him before Troy to pile up his booty. Then he will see if we are necessary to him or not. He has insulted Achilles, a better soldier, hasn't he, and taken away his spoil. Surely Achilles has a mild spirit or for this Atrides it would have been his last insolence!"

But the godlike Odysseus gazed at Thersites and spoke to him.

"Silence, outrageous braggart! If I hear you again mouthing as you do, may my head fall from my neck if I do not seize you in my powerful hand and after stripping you naked drive you to the ships with a beating!"

As he spoke, he struck with his royal scepter upon his back and shoulders. And Thersites cringed, weeping with rage. A bloody welt puffed up his back under the

scepter's blows; and he seated himself, quivering and muttering, hideous to look upon.

And the Achæans roared with laughter; and looking at one another, murmured:

"Certainly, Odysseus has already done a thousand excellent things by his crafty counsel and his warrior knowledge; but the best thing he ever did was to silence this insulting brawler."

. . . . . .

Thersites, not being able to take vengeance on Odysseus by force, mused against him a crafty ruse to make him suffer in spirit.

He conversed secretly at length with an evil soldier named Styrax with whom he loved to get drunk at the taverns kept by camp followers.

Styrax during this talk nodded his head in sign of assent.

"Sure you understand?" asked Thersites.

"Completely," replied Styrax. "And I'll do exactly as you say. But what do you give me?"

"Hang it!" exclaimed the club-foot. "The chiefs take all the best spoils from us. I've been able, here and there, to gather up a few things. I'll give you half."

. . . . . .

On the morrow, Styrax, dressed as a Phœnician, sought out Odysseus in his tent.

"Godlike Odysseus," he began, "a shipwreck cast me on the shore not far from here. I come from Ithaca, where I did some trading and where I saw the wise Penelope. I thought you might like to hear news of her."

"How is she?" asked Odysseus.

"Quite well," replied Styrax.

"Not too unhappy?"

"She seemed to me, underneath, a little downhearted. But she has good neighbors who console her and whom she often invites to feasts. There are the Princes of Xanthus, of Zacynthus, of Dulichium, and some others. The good Antinoüs is very attentive to your wife and entertains her as well as he can. They're not bored, O godlike Odysseus, in your palace in Ithaca!"

The hero made no sign, either because he was sure of the virtue of Penelope or because he was not interested in her actions. But without warning he dealt upon the back of Styrax a sharp blow with his royal scepter.

Styrax fled shrieking and rejoined Thersites behind a tamerisk.

"Well?" asked old Bandy-legs.

"I did your bidding," said Styrax. "It brought me a blow with a cudgel. I pass it on to you."

And he paid it with all his might.

. . . . . .

Thersites devised another scheme.

He slipped into the tent of Achilles. Seated on thick rugs, the son of Peleus was silent and grave.

"Illustrious Achilles," began Thersites. "No one can deny that Agamemnon and the other chiefs have acted abominably towards you. I told them what I thought of them. But Odysseus cruelly struck me with his scepter. You can see the marks on my back."

"Leave me in peace!" said the son of Peleus.

"You are," continued Thersites, "the most valiant of all the warriors, and I, I am nothing. But the great can sometimes make use of the small. We hate Odysseus equally. Let us combine our grievances. If you wish to employ me secretly against the King of Ithaca, he will not triumph long over your misfortune; for, though I may be feeble of body, my mind is not devoid of cunning."

"Leave me in peace!" repeated the hero.

And Thersites felt the royal scepter of the son of Peleus smite sharply across his shoulders.

. . . . . .

Then Thersites swore vengeance upon Achilles.

He knew how closely joined in friendship were Achilles and Patroclus, and decided that the keenest evil he could wreak upon them was to sow jealousy and distrust between them.

He knew also (for he spent his time rooting about the tents and picking up gossip) that Patroclus cherished one of his captives named Myrrha and that this charming child had been noticed by valiant Achilles.

So one morning when Patroclus before the camp of the Myrmidons was practicing throwing javelins, Thersites drew near and began considering the sport with interest, approving each cast by calling out. Then, not without effort, he pulled the darts from the soil and graciously carried them back to the young hero.

"Thank you," said Patroclus.

"Admirable!" said Thersites. "Achilles himself would be less adroit. But when men take up an opinion they hold it forever without examining it. It's just ac-

cepted that none of the Achæans is comparable to the son of Peleus."

"And that opinion is quite right," said Patroclus. "Achilles is the finest looking of all the Achæans; he is the most skilful archer; the best charioteer; the best rider; the most intrepid warrior."

"Certainly," allowed Thersites, "the gods have given him strength and agility of body. To others they have granted a subtle intellect, or the gift of linking words, or that of composing harmonious songs. But men are accustomed to honor force above all else."

"True," asserted Patroclus. "But Achilles has not only strength and comeliness. He speaks well, and he composes songs that he sings to the accompaniment of the lyre."

"Others," spoke Thersites, "would not cede to him on that point. Everybody, illustrious Patroclus, knows your gracious nature. But because he is the son of a goddess, Achilles has as voluntary servitors men who, perhaps, are worth as much as he is. What I am telling you, many Myrmidons think as well."

"Achilles is my friend," answered Patroclus.

. . . . . .

Tired out, Patroclus sat before his tent. A captive maiden brought him an amphora brimming with wine and a cup of chiseled silver.

He invited Thersites to drink with him.

"What is the name of that slave?" asked Old Clubfoot.

"Myrrha."

"Oh?" remarked Thersites, and he smiled mysteriously.

Then he added: "She is certainly beautiful."

"I love her dearly," said Patroclus.

"You are not the only one," added Thersites.

"What do you mean?"

"Oh! Nothing. Only rumors in the air. In any case, nothing can make me believe that Myrrha is not faithful to you."

"Why all these hints? You do not speak like a free man."

"Because I have no wish to hurt you."

"Suspicions and doubts are always more painful than the truth itself. Speak! or if not—"

"Pardon me!" begged Thersites. "Myrrha is not displeasing to illustrious Achilles; there is the truth."

"And Myrrha, does she know it?"

"It would seem so."

"How does she take it?"

"They say it does not displease her."

"Are you certain of what you say?"

"By Zeus and the gods of immortal Olympus, by dark Hades and the gods of the underworld, by—"

"Get out! Get out!" cried Patroclus.

. . . . . .

Thersites departed, amazed at not being beaten again. But a little later, crawling among the bushes, he returned to the tent of Patroclus, peeped through a hole and saw the young hero. He seemed to be pressing Myrrha with questions and the beautiful captive was weeping.

Then he saw Patroclus seize Myrrha by the hand and lead her rapidly toward the tent of Achilles.

"It is going very well," thought Club-foot. "Clearly they are going to carve each other."

. . . . . .

He hid behind the tent of the son of Peleus and strained his ear. He chuckled in advance over the violent and outrageous words that the two heroes would undoubtedly hurl at each other; but instead he heard Patroclus say:

"Godlike Achilles, dearest friend, why did you not speak to me? You desire this maiden, and she prefers you to me, as is only natural. If a vile creature had not told me, you would have suffered because of me, you whom I love above all mortals and much more than all women. I might not have known, and you might have hated me because of a captive. But now, take her, I give her to you, that you may love me always."

"Dear Patroclus," answered Achilles, "the gods have endowed you with a charming spirit. But today the great burden of sorrow overwhelms me so that I cannot take pleasure in your gift."

"Then let your tears flow, my friend, but keep Myrrha, I beg you. She is sweet, discreet, silent, and her mere presence will be grateful to you."

. . . . . .

Patroclus with these words left the tent of Achilles. He caught sight of Thersites who seemed embarrassed at seeing him.

"Be reassured," Patroclus told him. "I shall not beat you, poor fellow. You have no power to annoy me. You irritate yourself because the gods have distributed the benefits of this world among men. But

your anger is futile, and besides if you considered more carefully, the injustice of this distribution would be less bitter. Fate has heaped gifts upon Achilles; but he is doomed to die in the flower of youth; and I, whom you no doubt envy, I shall never survive him, if I do not perish before he does. Fate has refused you good looks, strength, and wealth, but it has given you an ingenious mind by which you might please men, perhaps even women, make yourself beloved, if you really tried. You would be less miserable if you were not so evil and if you considered moreover that we—all of us—are destined to die. Farewell, poor Thersites."

The weakling answered nothing, but two bitter tears fell painfully from his eyes.

THE INNOCENT DIPLOMACY OF HELEN

A SPACIOUS garden stretched in terraces above the Scæan Gate—the usual promenade of the Trojans and their wives.

One evening, seated upon a bench in the garden, Priam, Thymœtes, Lampos, Klytius, Antenor, Hiketaon, and Ukalegon, venerable old men, were gossiping over the news of the day when Helen happened to pass. And then they said to one another in a low voice:

"It is no wonder that the Trojans and the Achæans are willing to endure so many hardships for such a woman, for in beauty she is like the immortal goddesses."

. . . . . .

They spoke thus because they were old men, near to death, and because the sight of Helen gave them a last pleasure.

But quite different was the thought of the virtuous Princess Andromache, wife of Hector. The remark of the old men was repeated to her.

"Even with white hair one can be without good sense. Is it not a monstrous thing that an entire race should suffer the woes of war and that thousands of men should slaughter one another because of a shameless wench?"

"Helen is not shameless," replied Hector. "Her

behavior is perfect. She often reproaches Paris with his crime and tries to escape his love. She conducts herself in the severest fashion. But she is the unhappy victim of the fates."

"That's easy to say," replied Andromache. "And why! You men are indulgent towards—irregular—persons when they are beautiful, and the hidden virtue of your wives fails to impress you."

"It does impress us, and we regard it highly. But it is certain that the daughter of the Swan and Leda is not evil and that she has I know not what kind of charm that disarms all rancor."

"Men may feel that charm," added Andromache. "But for me, it gives me the horrors, for it was she who unchained misfortune upon my city."

. . . . . .

Andromache and her husband exchanged these remarks in one of the fifty bed chambers of polished stone, built one next the other, in which slept the sons of Priam with their legitimate wives.

But Helen lived with Paris in a dwelling apart, which she left only at times for a breath of fresh air above the Scæan Gate. She was simple, reserved, a little timid. She was amazed at her own adventure and quite sincerely attributed it to the will of the gods. The knowledge of her own beauty and of the sorcery within her rendered her less sensitive to unfavorable judgments and disagreeable remarks. But always, having been reared severely at Sparta, she suffered from her irregular position. She sensed and almost believed justified the hostility of virtuous women against her

and she wished to conquer it by modesty, correctness, and gentleness.

The Trojan women had decided to go in procession to the temple of Athena and there place a richly embroidered veil upon the knees of the goddess to induce her to take pity upon the city.

Helen felt a keen desire to take part in this ceremony.

Since she had fled with Paris she had adopted the gods and in consequence the country of her lover, and had become a good Trojan. Moreover, she preferred the customs of Troy to those of her former land; she found here less art perhaps, but much more comfort and luxury than in austere Lacedæmon.

. . . . . .

One evening while walking above the Scæan Gate she met Andromache.

She respectfully stepped aside before the wife of Hector. Andromache passed, head high, casting upon her a cold glance. Helen hurried home in tears.

But Andromache, although she had merely glanced, could not help noticing the harmony of her garb, especially the embroidery with which her robe was decorated. That evening she spoke to Hector about it.

"That woman is just what she is. But I must admit she has good taste."

Helen heard of this and had conveyed to one of Andromache's household the pattern of the embroidery that had so pleased the virtuous princess. She added some instructions about how to cut robes, girdles, and mantles.

Andromache allowed her women to profit by these

hints. She also allowed them to make the embroidery and a few days later she appeared on the promenade with this new finery. She saw Helen, who for that day had donned a simple robe of one piece. And this time she looked upon the companion of Paris with no rancor.

. . . . . .

Next day Helen met the little Astyanax in the arms of his nurse in the gardens of the King.

She politely asked this woman permission to kiss "the son of the most valiant of men and the most wise of women." The child finding her fair to look upon, smiled upon her and with a caressing murmur passed his tiny hands over the delicious countenance of the descendant of Tyndareus.

"Why," she sighed, "can I not have a fine little son! But the gods have denied me this joy."

And her eyes brimmed with tears.

"But at your age you can still hope," the nurse obligingly remarked.

"I'm afraid," continued Helen, "that the gods have cursed my womb with sterility! * Of all the signs of their anger this to me is the most poignant."

. . . . . .

The nurse related this encounter to her mistress in the presence of Hector.

"It must be admitted," remarked Andromache, "that this woman has preserved some good feelings."

"My belief," observed Hector, "is that Helen is made to live peaceably with a husband and children.

* I know well that according to a tradition Helen had a daughter Hermione by Theseus. But I have deliberately ignored this detail. (*Note of the author.*)

Her maternal instinct shows that. Evidently, her destiny is a contradiction of her character. It was her misfortune to meet my brother Paris, who is the most insincere but the most seductive of men. But Venus willed it; and no doubt Venus makes her sterile to keep her beautiful. So what is her glory is also her punishment. For after all—"

"My friend," interrupted Andromache, "be careful; you are too eager to defend her, and you are straying from the point."

. . . . . .

At this moment a maid-servant of Helen's bore in a magnificent toy for the infant Astyanax; a tiny silver chariot drawn by two cedar horses harnessed in gold.

The child, enchanted, clapped his hands.

Andromache, embarrassed, thought of returning the toy. But Astyanax wept. Hector interceded.

"To send back this little chariot," he explained, "would be to hurt the child and needlessly offend a woman who unquestionably has her faults, but I admire and respect her, and even she honors the virtue that she cannot observe. Let us keep this gift; it has no significance. You will not pretend, I suppose, that the good will of Helen is dangerous to a child eighteen months old."

Then he prudently added.

"You need not have any fear for your husband. Helen is not a coquette. Besides you are just as pretty —especially lately. You dress better than you did and that pleases me."

Andromache was delighted with these remarks, but

she did not tell him how she had learned to improve her looks.

. . . . . .

When Paris, saved by Venus from the hands of Menelaus, piteously entered his palace, pursued by the imprecations of Hector, Helen spoke to him.

"Oh!" as she loosed her hair, "I am nothing but a creature of misfortune! Rather on the day my mother bore me that a tempest had carried me away to a mountain or drowned me in the waves than that such things should have happened! But since the gods have willed these evils, at least I should have been allowed to be the wife of a more valiant warrior. Happy Andromache, spotless wife of the invincible Hector! True she has deserved this honor."

Andromache was told of this laudable speech.

"Poor Helen," she began to Hector, "has reasons, when you think of it. Her husband is rather a sorry lot. She might have a good influence over Paris, if he only had some spunk. She is not puffed up over her misstep and she does respect those who are respectable. For the rest, it would be childish to believe that she is the real cause of the war. It is clear that her abduction is only the pretext. Lacking that, the Achæans would have concocted some other one. She is right in speaking of destiny. That is the whole trouble in her life. She deserves to be virtuous."

. . . . . .

So the day drew near on which the Trojan women were to carry the sacred veil to the Temple of Athena.

Helen sought out King Priam, who had always been good to her.

"Sire," she said to him, "I wish to take part in this ceremony. Certainly not for vanity, but to show that in spirit I am one of these women of my new country and that they may no longer consider me a stranger. I beg you to conduct me to the temple just as the Trojan women enter, so that I may join their procession."

"My dear child," replied Priam, "I shall do as you wish. But are you not afraid that the wives of the Trojans—and above all the haughty Andromache—may do you some despite?"

"We shall see, Father dear."

. . . . . .

The procession of women had just arrived at the portico of the temple when Helen appeared, escorted by Priam.

Timid, with veiled eyes, she slipped behind the last line.

But Andromache, seeing her, approached and stretching out her hand, said:

"How good of you to come, my dear."

ON THE MARGIN OF THE ODYSSEY

THE SIREN

AS they approached the island of the Sirens the wind fell and the waves subsided. The sailors furled the sails. Odysseus, remembering the counsel of Circe, kneaded wax in his strong hands and with it stopped the ears of all his companions. They then bound him with cords tight to the mast. Then with their oars they smote the foamy sea.

From the depths of their cave the Sirens had seen the ship. When it was within range of their voices they gathered on the shore and began to sing:

"Come, O men, come!
No voyager can pass our isle
But needs must hear our song.
Then on he sails, o'erwhelmed with joy,
With the knowledge of things unknown before.
For we know all
That comes to pass in this bountiful world."

Raising their fresh dazzling bodies from the calm waters, they made welcoming gestures with their beautiful arms. But their most potent attraction was their voices, mild as milky water, penetrating as the fragrance of sea-weed, tender—even slightly hoarse—as the voice of desire.

Odysseus struggled against his bonds, but his companions, warned in advance, tightened the cords around his arms and legs.

But one of the sailors, named Euphorion, said to himself that it must be worth while—even at the risk of one's life—to hear the songs that so disturbed a man so wise as the prudent Odysseus.

He took the wax from his ears and listened.

What he heard made him lean farther and farther over the gunwale until in a few moments he plunged into the salt waves.

The sailors were in doubt about abandoning their companion, but Odysseus with a glance ordered them to sail on and pass the island.

. . . . . .

With all the strength of his desire Euphorion swam towards the voices.

The water, sparkling under the sun, penetrated darkling into a blue grotto. At the entrance were the Sirens, seven in number. They resembled young maidens to the waist; they had eyes of grayish blue, hair of golden green, pointed teeth in slightly large mouths, and childlike countenances. Their thighs were circled by a sheath of scales, and the swimmer noticed the variegated reflection of their tails moving in the water.

When he was quite near them, the Sirens ceased singing; then throwing themselves upon the man, they dragged him to the depth of the cave and placed him naked upon a jetting rock where whitened bones lay. For these beautiful creatures would rend apart the bodies of shipwrecked men and suck their blood with their flower-like mouths.

Now one of the Sirens had appeared to Euphorion more beautiful than the others, and with a countenance less stern. He turned to her.

"I shall die content after having heard the songs of the daughters of the sea. But I shall be happier still if death comes to me from you alone."

The Siren gazed at him with astonishment. It was the first time she had seen a desire and a thought light up the face of a man, for ordinarily the features and eyes of the shipwrecked showed only terror, or if their efforts had exhausted them, no feeling at all.

She pushed back her sisters.

"This stranger belongs to me."

The other Sirens moved away either because she had some authority over them or because an unknown rule controlled the division of living spoils of the sea.

She was alone with the crafty Greek.

"Your name?" she asked.

Then, when she knew it, she said immediately, "Euphorion, I love you. And, though I am immortal, for the first time I say this and feel what it means."

"And you," said the Greek, "what is your name?"

"Leucosia."

. . . . . .

The other Sirens, according to their compact, allowed Euphorion and Leucosia to live apart as they pleased.

Behind the cave there was a secluded meadow with a spring of fresh water. Euphorion drank this water and lived on shellfish.

Leucosia never left him. Together they enjoyed the rocking of the waves, letting themselves be lifted and pressed by the liquid caress. Sometimes from the summit of a rock the Siren dropped like an arrow, her tail rigid; he caught her in his arms, and both plunged into the briny gulf. At times they revelled in the sun,

among the basins in the caves, in the showers of foam. Or they played with the gentle dolphins, performing all sorts of pranks with them.

When night came the other Sirens lying on the grass stretched their unwieldy tails out side by side, but Euphorion and Leucosia retired to a corner of the meadow, and there the man slept in the cold arms of the little water goddess.

They talked but little. Leucosia knew the words pertaining to things necessary to the existence of a water goddess of the second rank on a Mediterranean reef. She could name the sky, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars, the rocks, the fish, and the different parts of her body. She also knew how to say: "I see, I hear, I feel, I love, I desire, I hope, I wish." But that's about the full extent of the vocabulary of this young immortal.

One day Euphorion spoke to her.

"When, from the speedy ship, I heard you, your sisters and you, you boasted of knowing things unknown to men. Tell them to me, Leucosia."

But she made him comprehend that the Sirens lied, and only said that to arouse the curiosity of the voyagers.

Truly the words they sang and that he now heard every evening, expressed no knowledge of the mind, but the feelings that correspond to the grace of the morning, the splendor of the sunset, the immensity and the beauty of the sea—or simply the joy of having a tireless supple body—sometimes the pricking of desires that remained indefinite for the ingenuous musicians,

but that were quite definite in the soul of Euphorion, endowed with human memories and experiences.

. . . . . .

Leucosia soon perceived this melancholy of her lover and dispelled it by her refreshing kisses. In the water and in the grotto cove she was stronger and more supple than he, and helped and protected him at every turn. But on the shore and in the secluded meadow, forced as she was to move along on her hands dragging her useless tail, she wondered at and coveted the agile feet of her mate. Then she felt that he had seen more things than she had and that his mind was furnished with ideas and thoughts that she had never suspected.

He made up his mind to teach her and tried to make her comprehend the life of humanity on the mainland and large islands. But he soon realized that she did not understand because the words he used had no relation with any object that he could put before her eyes.

Then he began to be slightly bored. Leucosia had for him no longer the tang of novelty. She was too different from him. Her spirit was too elementary. What at first had charmed him became tiresome. He was provoked at Leucosia because of her ignorance—and because of her cold salty flesh.

He recalled with always keener regret his old life. At night in the secluded meadow while the little goddess with the scaly haunches lay asleep beside him, he saw the fields, the forests, the streams, the toiling oxen, the dwellings of men, the shops of tradesmen, the temples on the hills, the vessels in the harbors, and the taverns where he had drunk fragrant wines, the

little dancers, blonde and brunette, with flowers stuck in their hair, whose hands were warm, whose legs . . .

At this time a vessel drawn by the songs of the Sirens had been wrecked on a neighboring reef. Euphorion watched with horror when these graceful nymphs plunged their sharp teeth into the shipwrecked creatures and swelled up like white wine skins with the blood they sucked. Leucosia had not wished to sing with her sisters or share in the celebration. Euphorion was pleased by this; but in questioning her he learned that she had refrained only that she might not displease him—so far love, common to nearly all animals, had been able to influence her—but pity, a quality only of humanity, was unknown to her.

. . . . . .

The Sirens breathed equally well under water and in the air. Taught by his mate, Euphorion learned to hold his breath under water longer than any other diver. Often he delighted to swim with Leucosia about the coral groves and the submarine gardens wondering whether the forms stiffly swaying in the glassy transparence were stones, plants, or animals.

In one of those excursions he discovered at the bottom of a sea valley the remains of a ship and among these fragments vases, braziers, household utensils, necklaces, jewels, belts, silver mirrors, painted tablets showing various scenes of human life—and a casket full of gold.

With the aid of Leucosia he brought the booty to land. He placed a necklace about her throat, bracelets on her arms, bound her waist with a chiseled belt, and presented her with a mirror. She thought herself

beautiful and smiled. Then he explained the uses of the other articles and what the scenes in the colored pictures were.

This time Leucosia was able to form some ideas of a life different from her own. She remarked with a trace of sadness:

"I should like to see all that; but I am only a sea goddess and I shall never know anything but the water."

The idea then entered Euphorion's mind of stirring even more in her a curiosity about the land and of taking advantage of it to escape from the island of the Sirens. Thus he plotted to desert his companion just when she was becoming more intelligent and when she began to draw closer to him.

He never wearied of telling her fascinating stories of the life one leads among mankind.

"If you would come with me," he said at last, "we could swim across the sea to a city called Athens—only three days from here."

"But," she objected, "I could not walk far on land."

"I shall help you," said Euphorion, "and when we reach the city a magnificent chariot, such as you saw in the painted tablets, will carry you wherever you wish. And we shall live happily on the gold from this casket."

But he did not speak all that was in his mind.

. . . . . .

A swim of three days was a mere game for the Siren. At times swimming beside her, at times borne by her, Euphorion himself was not too much exhausted when they reached the shore of the mainland.

The place was deserted. But a town appeared on the horizon. A rough and dusty path led to it.

Euphorion made himself a loin covering of leaves to appear decently before men.

The Siren dragged herself along on her hands. But she tore her flesh on the stones and the fury of the sun beat upon her.

Soon Euphorion was far ahead of her.

She called him.

"This land of men is hard," she pleaded. "I carried you, my dear; now in your turn, carry me."

He had not the heart to refuse. He retraced his steps, leaned down, and offered his back. The Siren clasped her arms around his neck; he straightened up, and as he walked her scaly tail dragged behind in the dust.

Sweating under his burden, Euphorion muttered impatiently. He asked himself what he was going to do with this woman-fish in the land of men.

Suddenly he brutally loosened her arms from around his neck, let her fall flat to the ground, and made off at a great pace.

"Euphorion! Euphorion!" the Siren cried plaintively.

This appeal so touched him that he stopped.

"Be patient," he said, "I am going to the city, but I shall come back with a chariot to get you."

"No, no!" she sobbed. "You will not come back, I know. You do not love me any longer because I am not like a woman. It is because of me that you are alive; yet because of you I am going to die; for the

gods must have taken away my immortality to punish me for loving a mortal."

Her arms quivered and for the first time tears welled from her pale eyes. Her dusty tail, its brilliant tints dulled, beat feebly upon the path.

"Euphorion, Euphorion! Have pity!" she repeated.

"Pity?" asked he. "You have never spoken that word before."

"Because I never suffered," she said. "Hear me, my lover. I know that I shall always be a drag upon you. And I shall be jealous of women with feet. Now, what I longed to see makes me afraid. But I am too weak to go back to the sea. Carry me to the shore and I shall go back to my cruel sisters alone."

"Cruel?" exclaimed Euphorion. "Another word you have never spoken before."

"Oh," she wailed. "You have shown me what these words mean."

Euphorion, without another word, took her in his arms, and the Siren's hanging hair swept his knees. She smiled at him through her tears, then she sobbed so tenderly that he felt his will melting.

Gently he placed her on the sand beside the water.

"Adieu, lover," she said.

"Oh," he sighed, "if you only had legs."

"But—I have none. And I shall need none down there in the transparent water. I shall try to forget, to become like my sisters again. For if I remember I shall be too distressed over having known you and for having learned all I now know. But can I forget? Oh, I am so afraid! I am only a poor little outcast Siren."

Euphorion wept.

"Be what you will," he said. "But I love you; I will not have you go away without me. We shall become whatever the gods decree. Let us go together!"

. . . . . .

And the man would certainly have committed that folly if the benevolent Thetis had not at that moment appeared to the lovers.

"You interest me," she said, "and I wish to do something for you, because Leucosia, you have been kind to one of those who fought with my son Achilles; and because you, Euphorion, have felt pity for one of my sea nymphs just when you were about to realize one of your dearest wishes; and finally because you have developed in each other both knowledge and goodness. I can recompense you in many divers ways. I can, Leucosia, before you leave alone, wipe from your memory all you have learned so that you will never suffer from it. To you, Euphorion, I can give the body and fins of a dolphin, while you keep your human mind and memory, so that you may live agreeably with Leucosia in the boundless ocean. But I wish to make you happy in the way you desire at the present moment. Leucosia, my dear child, to live with him, are you willing to renounce your immortality?"

"Most certainly," said the Siren. "To be immortal with comfort one must be deprived of the power of thought."

"Many thanks!" exclaimed Thetis.

"Oh!" explained Leucosia, "I did not mean to apply that to you. I meant it only for a little goddess like me."

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"Don't apologize, my dear. But it is understood. You consent to being mortal?"

"With all my heart!"

"Be woman then and follow the man you love."

"My child," added the indulgent goddess, "go beg a robe of the priestess in the little temple you see on that hill, a hundred paces yonder. Then, go together to the city."

Euphorion and Leucosia beamed with ecstasy. But Thetis, as she turned away, smiled doubtfully; for she was not absolutely certain that she had brought them happiness after all.

THE MARRIAGE OF TELEMACHUS

TELEMACHUS had just attained his twentieth year. His parents thought of a marriage; but it was not an easy matter to find in the land a suitable wife, for all the young princesses of Xanthus, Zacynthus, and Dulichium were sisters or cousins of the suitors killed by the magnanimous Odysseus, and it was feared that they would not plead to be allowed to become one of the family.

Odysseus then recalled Nausicaa, her grace, and her gentle disposition. To her parents he owed his return to his native land.

"Why," he reflected, "I remember how her father, Alcinous, believing me a bachelor, wanted me for his son-in-law. I was a little ripe for his daughter. Nevertheless I am certain she would have accepted me. All the more reason, my son, why she should find in you a duplicate of me, younger, with a fresher skin, and more pleasant to gaze upon. Perhaps she is not yet wed. If you are of my mind, as soon as the winds are favorable, you will equip a ship and pay a visit to King Alcinous, in the island of the Phæacians."

"Willingly," said Telemachus.

Now that very day a messenger from Menelaus, King of Sparta, having landed at the port of Ithaca, came to seek Odysseus with gifts.

"Hear the message I bear to you. King Menelaus

and his wife Helen have cherished the kindest memories of your son, Telemachus. Soon they were to receive in their home the King and the Queen of Phæacia, whose guest you were, and their daughter Nausicaa. If then it might please your son to return to Sparta, he would find that amiable child there. King Menelaus said no more to me, but if Telemachus accepts his invitation, he can take advantage of the ship that carried me here."

"All that is well conceived," replied Odysseus, "and I recognize the wisdom and good will of the illustrious King Menelaus."

"Father," said Telemachus, "I shall start tomorrow morning."

. . . . . .

Telemachus was welcomed cordially by King Menelaus and the divine Helen. A servant had bathed and anointed him and he routed his hunger and thirst.

"Where is," he inquired, "the Princess Nausicaa?"

"She has not yet arrived," replied Helen. "But we expect her in a few days with her noble parents."

Telemachus, although well reared, could not cover his feeling of deception and chagrin. Helen, who was amiable, set herself to console and amuse him. She let him sit near her at table, and in the garden when they enjoyed the freshness, and under the portico where they gathered to see dances and games of strength and skill. She saw to it that during the meals the bard sang only of the deeds of Odysseus, and gazing at Telemachus she smiled to him at the beautiful passages of the poem. Often she expressed the keenest admiration for the irreproachable Penelope. Some-

times, seated before the hearth as she spun with purple wool, she begged Telemachus to help her wind her spindle. And she amiably told him the most entrancing episodes of the siege of Troy, not once mentioning Paris.

Helen was thirty-five years old. Her beauty, a trifle ripe, was all the more moving. Her glances seemed to plunge deeper than those of other women; her voice seemed more penetrating with more caressing cadences. In general she was serious, but with an accomplished and assured grace.

One evening she spoke to Telemachus.

"The ship bringing the rulers of Phæacia and their daughter has been sighted from Pylos. A chariot awaits them at the harbor. Tomorrow they will be here."

"So soon!" said Telemachus.

. . . . . .

Nausicaa was in the flower of first youth; but this advantage is often less appreciated by young men than by mature and experienced ones. Telemachus paid slight attention to the little princess. He thanked her in fair terms for what she had done for Odysseus; he found nothing more to say to her.

He thought only of Helen. Her image haunted his nights. After Theseus, after Menelaus, after Paris, after Hector, after all the other heroes, he experienced the overpowering charm of the tranquil daughter of Leda.

The coolness of Telemachus towards Nausicaa was finally noticed by Alcinous and his wife Arete. They believed that the son of Odysseus was postponing his

declaration. Menelaus attributed the delay to the timidity of the two young people.

"Patience," he advised. "Time brings all things to pass. Time even brought back my wife."

. . . . . .

But Helen had discovered the hidden feelings of Telemachus. She spoke to him privately.

"My dear boy, I can't understand you. Nausicaa is the daughter of a rich, powerful King, to whom your father owes a great deal. She is young, pretty, sensible, virtuous. She will know how to keep her house. Your father was able to see that;—she washes her clothes herself; a thing few daughters of kings are willing to do—the times are so changed now. She loves you, in fine, and I know that since she doesn't wish—she is proud—to confide in her mother, she often weeps over you on the bosom of her good nurse, Eurymedusa. Why do you torment such a charming girl by your coldness? And why do you refuse the happiness the gods have prepared for you?"

"I shall tell you," said Telemachus, "since you wish to know. It is because I love—"

"Don't tell me, my dear boy," interrupted Helen. "I know that you are, as so many others, the victim of an evil charm that spreads from me in spite of myself. My mournful glory has troubled your mind. Yes, I am the woman for whom thousands of men had their throats cut, because of whom so many mothers, wives, and sweethearts poured out oceans of tears . . . all that, perhaps, is a compliment, but I have had no pride for a long time. I do not want to cause the misfortune of any man. I am satiated with adventures. My one

desire is to live quietly and regularly with my Menelaus, to whom I owe great reparation. I have been talked about long enough. Besides I am now an old woman."

"That is not true!"

"What do you want?"

"To carry you away."

"I have been carried away often. My dear boy, doesn't that cool your ardor?"

"Quite the contrary."

"Oh, unfortunate! Unfortunate! But tell me, where should you take me?"

"I brought here twelve talents of gold, and I have through my mother a rich domain on the island of Zacynthus."

"Then you are not ashamed to carry off the wife of your host?"

"I should not do it because of hatred of him. Besides, others have done it before this. And I obey a god stronger than virtue itself."

"But if my husband fits out ships to recapture me?"

"No—they would not begin another Trojan War. Besides, what difference would that make?"

"No difference to me; I wish to die tranquilly. Go, leave me in peace; I have already traveled too much. Nausicaa will be entirely yours."

"She does not please me."

"She is wasting away with chagrin."

"She's a bore."

"Too well, my boy, I see that you are swayed by the powerful love, the sinister god, for you are becoming

ill-tempered. Leave me, leave me. I am weary of hatching only evil in the hearts of men."

Helen left him with these words and went to meditate in the vast gardens of King Menelaus.

. . . . . .

In a secluded copse she came upon Nausicaa weeping. The young girl threw herself into her arms.

"Queen," she sobbed, "it is because of you that I suffer, and that is why I appeal to you, for you are good and full of wisdom."

She told, in broken phrases, of her love for Telemachus, and how the disdainful youth attracted her with his charm in spite of his coolness, and of the dream she had indulged in of a delightful and happy life with him yonder in the clement island of Phæacia, "where already I could see myself," she sighed, "a cherished wife and a bountiful mother, entirely his, my first love, only his for my whole life."

At these words the brows of Helen lowered and her alabaster forehead darkened, but only for a second.

They strolled about the garden for a long time, but now it was Helen who talked.

. . . . . .

That evening Helen contrived to find herself alone with Telemachus in a corner of the portico.

"I lied to you," she said to him in a low voice. "I love you. Carry me away."

"I was sure you did," Telemachus replied simply. "And I have arranged everything. I have stationed at Pylos a ship fitted for the voyage. I shall wait for you tomorrow at the harbor at the hour of twilight."

"I shall be there," said Helen, "with one of my maid-servants."

. . . . . .

Night came. Telemachus on the quay saw two veiled women approaching. One of them seemed young and slender and walked briskly.

"Oh," he said to himself, "what a youthful stride. Helen only of all mortals has that walk of a goddess."

He went to meet her. She put a finger on her lips under her veil. Silently he helped her to embark with her servant and led her to the deck where a sumptuous bed was prepared.

The boat floated from the shore. Telemachus tried to raise the traveler's veil. She repulsed him gently, murmuring, "Tomorrow!"

He understood such modesty and stretched out on the poop where he slept badly beneath the unregarding stars.

At dawn he returned to the deck to watch the awakening of Helen—and saw Nausicaa and her nurse Eurymedusa.

The maiden, seated on the couch, gazed at him frightened, trying to smile and imploring him with brimming eyes.

Telemachus was seized by violent anger.

"Well!" he cried. "This is a fine trick for an innocent girl. I did not know that in your country it was the custom for chaste girls to run after men and possess them by tricks. I did not love you, Nausicaa; but now what feelings can I have for you?"

Nausicaa burst into tears.

"It's not my doing," she stammered. "Helen wished

it. She assured me that I must, and that it would all end well. And I resisted her a long time before I obeyed her."

"Helen, you say? Helen? But then—"

His anger suddenly turned against Helen. But as the divine daughter of Leda was far away and he could not chastise her, he grew all the angrier at Nausicaa.

"This adventure is stupid," he said. "For now what shall I do with you?"

"I do not know."

"Shall I use you as a captive, since you offer yourself?"

"You will not do that, for you are not vile. And besides my nurse will defend me."

"Shall I take you back to Pylos and set you on shore, a laughing stock for the passers-by?"

Nausicaa put her hand to her heart, called, "Nurse! nurse!" and fainted.

While Eurymedusa worked over her, Telemachus examined the maiden. For the first time he saw that, though less beautiful than Helen, she was fresher and entirely charming. Then, her weakness, at the same time her candid courage, her love so confiding and so brave—all this little by little pierced his heart to its core.

When Nausicaa recovered she gazed at him and understood that he willed no evil to her. She rose and fell upon the bosom of the son of Odysseus.

"Save me, my friend! And make me your wife, since there is no other way to save me."

And Telemachus, bound by those sweet arms, feeling

against him that supplicating body, felt himself conquered.

"We shall go," he said, "to Ithaca and I shall present you to my noble parents. But the divine Helen has tricked me unworthily."

"I forgive her," said Nausicaa, smiling through her tears.

THE CONFESSION OF EUMÆUS

THREE days after the godlike Odysseus had killed the suitors and taken possession of his palace, the swineherd Eumæus fell gravely ill. He languished, unable to eat or drink.

Then he prayed his companion, the goatherd Philœtius to seek out Odysseus and say to him, "Master, your servant Eumæus is dying and wishes to see you."

Odysseus went to the hut in the fields. There he found the swineherd Eumæus lying on thick skins beneath warm covers (for he lacked nothing), but ravaged by a fever that made him turn on his bed as one "turns above the brazier to broil it the stomach of a victim, stuffed with blood and fat."

Eumæus addressed Odysseus.

"Master, thanks for your coming. I have something to say to you. Your sire Laertes bought me when I was a baby, and your mother Anticleia reared me kindly and treated me almost as well as she did her youngest daughter, the beautiful Clymene. Do you believe that I am wholly devoted to you and your family?"

"I do believe it," said Odysseus.

"Listen, then," continued Eumæus. "About a month before your return as I was driving a young pig to the palace for Penelope and her servants, I met at the gate of the courtyard a stranger, a Phœnician

recently arrived who carried a bale of merchandise. At his request I took him to Penelope. He spread out before her jewels and embroideries. But .your venerable wife bought nothing, although he poured out his artful words, for she had no mind to adorn herself in your absence. Then the Phœnician suggested herbs and powders against sickness (for he was skilled in physic). The well-disposed Penelope took several boxes and also some blue stones to charm away evil influences. She offered him food and permission, if he so desired, to sleep in this hut with me near the swine.

"The Phœnician's name was Hamilcar. He was slender and short, with womanish eyes, gentle manners, and a soft voice. He had seen many cities and peoples, he told his adventures well; but it was not hard to see that not all his tales were true.

"On the morrow he went out early. I stayed behind to care for the swine; but in the afternoon I carried a basket of figs to the palace. I found Hamilcar in the great hall, seated near the table of the suitors. He was enjoying himself by singing—not the deeds of heroes—but little songs of love; and so well that the good bard Phemius seemed put out. Venerable Penelope had come down from her chamber to the stair landing overlooking the hall and there, leaning on the railing, she listened to these love songs; and doubtless thinking of you, she wept at them; and yet she asked for more. Now, the Phœnician, while he sang, stared at Penelope with an insolence that your chaste wife did not perceive; and a god put in my mind the idea that this stranger desired the wife of my master."

"But," asked Odysseus, "did not all the suitors desire her also?"

"They desired her, perhaps," resumed Eumæus, "but above all they desired her great wealth. Moreover, they watched one another; and besides they took their pleasure with the maids.

"The following night, a god woke me suddenly. I saw that the Phœnician, who slept near me, was cautiously leaving his bed. I followed him outside without being seen. He started toward the palace. There he took a ladder hidden behind some bushes and leaned it against the courtyard wall."

"But," said Odysseus, "even in the yard, he would find doors that he could not open."

"Who knows?" went on Eumæus. "This man was fertile in tricks and secrets. Likewise, he may have been in league with one of the maids."

"I guessed that he came for one of them," remarked Odysseus.

"Possibly, but I cannot believe it," said Eumæus. "I cannot believe it because of the way he stared at your venerable wife. Besides, I had no way of finding out his intentions. When he began to mount the ladder, I rushed at him, seized him by the leg, and dashed him to the ground. Then as he was stunned by his fall I easily strangled him. He moved his feet, but not long. Did I do well, O master?"

"Assuredly!"

"I slung the body across my shoulders," continued Eumæus, "and carried it to the pig-sties. I carefully buried it in a corner of the stable; I even made a little libation to the gods of the lower regions, that he might

repose in peace. On the morrow I told Penelope that the Phœnician had embarked at dawn, taking advantage of a good opportunity."

"And how did she take his departure?"

"She said nothing except, 'I wish him a good voyage, for he was keen and agreeable in conversation.'"

"And afterwards?"

"I came back here to lie down and slept soundly. But the following night I could not close my eyes; or rather, when I dropped to sleep I dreamed that I was struggling with the ghost of Hamilcar, and that this ghost, horrible to look upon, pinned me to the earth and deadened all my limbs.

"Now, next morning when I went into the stable I saw that the swine had half uncovered the body of Hamilcar and had begun to eat it. And I understood that was the reason why his spirit tormented me. Then I carried his remains to the orchard (and it was not a pleasant job); I planted them deep and covered them with a mound of grass; I prayed to the gods of the lower world; I poured out libations of milk and wine. Useless, all of it. My nights were still disturbed. Doubtless, when you reached home, O master, I had forgotten my trouble for some days, either because of my joy at seeing you again or because the gods wished to grant me power to help you against the suitors. But see now, my torments have come back. I am wasting away; I suffer a thousand deaths in my head and my whole body. The spirit of the Phœnician will not be appeased because all his body is not in one place. It is not in my power to put back what is missing. I wished to tell you all this before I die, so you may

know the cause of my illness, and so you may seek a remedy for it if there be any. You must not be angry with me, O master, since it was in trying to serve you that I drew evil upon myself."

"You are right," said Odysseus. "Wait for me."

. . . . . .

The hero went to meditate beside the sea. He asked himself whether Penelope had been moved by the speech and the glances of the Phœnician.

"Eumæus declares not; but he must have believed my wife in great danger to have done so much to save her. Yet what risk did she run, having with her her nurse and her fifty women? Could Eumæus suspect in my venerable wife a moment of weakness? This morning, dressing her hair, Penelope hummed a strange little song. One the Phœnician sang? But did Eumæus act only because of loyalty or did some other sentiment urge him to protect the wife of his master so vigorously? Eumæus is a little younger than I; his countenance is not base; although a slave, he is the son of a king—such are the chances of destiny. Could it be? I suspect, in all this, no guilty act; but at times in the depths of the hearts of men there are sentiments, hidden from them, placed there by an unknown power. Although for men many things are obscure; nothing is more obscure than their own minds."

. . . . . .

Thus the crafty Odysseus meditated. But soon it occurred to him that he had better not seek what he could never find. Besides, chaste Penelope, who had waited for him twenty years was no longer in the

flower of her youth; and now that he saw her again she awakened in him less desire than she had when he thought of her at a distance, out there on the vast sea.

He went back to Eumæus and spoke to him gently.

"Take courage, faithful Eumæus. I have seen many peoples, and I have inquired into their customs and their beliefs. I know gods of whom you have never heard. The ghost that torments you is not, as you say, that of a Phœnician; for I spent a long time in Phœnicia, and I know a god of that land who will deliver you as soon as I have sacrificed to him an ox, while I repeat certain prayers. And that's what I am going to do at once."

And Eumæus, believing, was completely cured.

THE SHADOWS AWAKEN

BEYOND the ocean is the land of the Cimmerians, eternally enveloped in mist. Dead waters, fields of asphodels, pale hills. There dwelt the "heads without power," the spirits, the shadows, the forms of the dead. There lived the dead, vaguely, feebly, sorrowfully. (For one cannot conceive life without the body, nor can one wish that all is ended at the funeral pyre or in the tomb.) "No longer do the nerves sustain the flesh and bones. . . . The flame of the funeral pyre having mastered nerves, flesh, and bones, the spirit, escaped and preserving the form of the body, floats like a dream." The dead, "images of those who are no more," continue by habit to do what they did before. Achilles forever brandishes his weapons, Agamemnon waves his scepter, Minos delivers his judgments, Phædra and Leda invoke love, the crowd still serves. But all this is no more than gestures, accompanied only by the sleeping and gradually fading memory of the feelings and thoughts of former times.

. . . . . .

When Odysseus visited the land of the Cimmerians to consult the shadow of divine Tiresias, and when he had dug a trench and poured into it the blood of a heifer, the souls of the dead, rustling like crisped leaves swayed by the winds of autumn, pressed round the hole to drink the blood and by its power regain a semblance of life and strength. But the hero drove

them back with his sword, and would let none drink save those spirits he was pleased to hold converse with: his mother Anticleia, Achilles, Agamemnon, Phædra, Ariadne, Leda, and the comely Antilochus.

Now, after the departure of the shrewd Odysseus, those spirits that had drunk of the blood retained for a few days in their forms now less transparent and held firmer by a semblance of nerves, flesh, and bones, the power to feel, to be stirred, to desire, and to make themselves understood. A half-life, fragile and waning, had been granted them.

At first, they recalled more exactly what they had done and suffered while they lived. Surrounded by the other shadows, still mute, they tasted the forgotten delight of conversation. And in spite of themselves, although their memories brought back more griefs than pleasures, they regretted their lives bitterly and would have experienced them again. And all approved what Achilles said to Odysseus, "Speak no more to me of death. I should rather be the hired drudge of a poor man than the king of those who are no more."

Thus they endeavored to live again, each according to his nature, as much as was permitted to them by the fleeting energy drunk from the bloody trench.

. . . . . .

In the first joy of the little restored life they felt full of good will for one another.

"Why should one be jealous, hate, do evil? If the possessions we had before were not worthy of the cares we bestowed upon them, how much more vain are the possessions of the land of shadows, how much greater the folly of quarreling over them."

And yet, from the second day the shadow of Achilles and the shadow of Agamemnon ceased to be friends. Each claimed the right to reign over the pale troop of empty forms: one on the pretension that he was the most valiant of the Greeks; the other because in the other world he had been "King of Kings."

The shades of the warriors who had not drunk of the blood looked on at this quarrel. Light murmurs, like those made by a breeze in dried grass, indicated their favor or hostility. Stirred by obscure memories, some ranged themselves behind Agamemnon, while others grouped about Achilles, as they had in their earthly existence been loyal to Atrides or the son of Thetis. And Agamemnon, followed by his transparent soldiers, took up his position behind a colorless tarn, while Achilles established his camp of phantoms upon an ashen hill.

Meanwhile Phædra, in whom the blood of the trench had revived her fatal love, sought among the shades for the spirit of the fierce Hippolytus. She found him occupied in shooting arrows that vanished in the mist. She wooed him in burning words; and as he could not speak, but made only hesitant motions, she believed she had persuaded him, and she threw herself upon his form to embrace him. But her arms closed upon her own bosom, having sought to encircle an image. She repeated her embrace, this time more carefully so that the specter remained enclosed within her arms. But this gave her no pleasure; and as soon as she drew her arms closer, the figure escaped. And Phædra tried again, all the while uttering plaintive protests.

Leda, always disposed to extraordinary loves, took advantage of her revived power to desire the giant Orion. The huge shadow of the hunter hurried across the fields of asphodel pursuing imaginary fauns. Leda watched for him from behind a thicket and when he passed with long strides, she tried to attract his attention by sighs and caressing words. But Orion did not even hear her.

In the same manner, Ariadne had felt her affectionate disposition return. Less extreme than Phædra and Leda she turned her gaze upon Antilochus, who having supped the red liquid offered as in their former existence some response.

The somber Procris had also noticed the beautiful warrior. But Antilochus preferred the sensitive Ariadne to her; and the two—Ariadne and Antilochus—paced along pale Acheron towards a copse of olives with leaves of tarnished silver.

. . . . . .

On the third day (if one may use such a word to measure time where no sun rises) the armies of Achilles and Agamemnon fell upon each other. To speak truth, the warriors ran little risk of wounding one another. Soon they were only a crowd of shadows passing through one another; so that soon the two armies had changed positions with no other results. Then bravely they prepared to pass through one another once more.

But between the two hosts, Achilles and Agamemnon, so it seemed, fought a little more like men. For Agamemnon wounded Achilles in the thigh and a few rose-colored drops issued from the wound. A moment later Achilles plunged the point of his sword in Aga-

memnon's breast, but only a few drops appeared, not even pink but colorless. Then the cries of the two chiefs sank in their throats; and the blows of their swords drew not even a drop of liquid from their fading bodies. Their forms met and passed through each other without any resistance; and they were no more than two shadows fighting in the midst of shadows.

At that instant, Phædra, clinging to the shadow of Hippolytus, was only a shadow embracing a shadow.

And Leda, who had started to hurry after the giant Orion, had exhausted in this effort her small supply of blood; and she knew that she was only a shadow pursuing the shadow of a hunter of shadows.

And beneath the olives with tarnished silver leaves, just as Ariadne and Antilochus with their lips already soft and ashen attempted a delusive kiss, jealous Procris, who had glided after them, raised a poignard aimed at her rival. Antilochus threw himself before his mistress and received the blow. And Procris was about to cry, "Oh, great gods! I have killed you!"

But the cry died on her lips. She saw that the two lovers were again only empty shades.

"Since they—both he and she," she said to herself, "are no more than that, it makes no difference."

But having thought that, she could think no more; and she was only a shadow that had tried to stab a shadow in the arms of a shadow.

. . . . . .

Now while these vain things were happening, Anticleia, the venerable mother of Odysseus, had remained sitting with her head bowed in her hands. She repeated the words of her son and tried with all her

power to recapture and retain the visions he had revived in her mind:—the palace in Ithaca, the broad orchard, the rocky heights, the harbor, the blue sea, the movements and the garb of her old husband Laertes, the departure of Odysseus for Troy, and the noble visage of her dear son. But as the blood, even by this effort, was consumed in her feeble veins, all these memories that she wished to hold slipped from her and the venerable Anticleia was only a shadow vaguely dreaming of shadows.

And all was as it had been before.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE ZEND-AVESTA

THE FIRST IMPULSE

TOURIRI was a rich citizen of Bagdad renowned for his virtues. Not only did he succor the poor with silver, even to reducing his luxury to multiply his alms; but his patience in listening to the plaints and the confidences of all the suffering was great to the point of comforting them by sympathizing remarks and even conversing with them.

He bore with resignation the little humble annoyances that almost entirely make up the scheme of human existence. He was really tolerant, and never became irritated when others disregarded his advice;—a rare and difficult virtue, for the secret desire of every man is that all other men shall be at once inferior to him yet resemble him.

Wedded to a peevish wife, he remained faithful to her, forgave her spells, and never grew angry because she was not younger and more beautiful. And finally, having the habit of composing verses and writing dialogues for the theater, he rejoiced in the successes of his rivals and showed his appreciation to them by sincere remarks and good offices.

In brief, his whole life was but charity, gentleness, loyalty, unselfishness; and he passed for a saint who preferred to pose as a gallant man.

Not always did his countenance show the traits that should ordinarily mark the faces of saints. His features were tortured like those of a man in the grasp

of violent passions or secret anguish; and often people noticed that just before he moved he lowered his eyelids for a moment, either to collect himself or to prevent people from reading his glances. But no one thought anything of this.

. . . . . .

Not far from Bagdad dwelt a hermit named Maitreya,* worker of miracles, to whom the faithful flocked in pilgrimages. Freed from all the usual conditions of mankind, Maitreya kept himself so motionless that the swallows made their nests on his shoulders. His beard, coated with dried offal, fell to his stomach, and his body was like a knotted tree trunk. And he had lived thus for ninety years because this was his will.

One day he overheard a pilgrim make a remark.

"Touriri by reason of his goodness seems like an incarnation of Ormuzd. Surely there would be no more suffering in the world if such a man could do all he wished."

The motionless Maitreya became more motionless. It was plain that the hermit was entering into direct communication with Ormuzd. After some moments he spoke.

"I cannot obtain from Ormuzd that Touriri should have the power to do all he may wish, for then he would be god himself. But Ormuzd grants that from tomorrow forward the first desire formed by this virtuous man in every single circumstance of his life shall be immediately realized."

"Oh," observed the pilgrim, "that comes to the same

* Here I am mixing India and Persia; but does that make any difference? (*Note of the author.*)

thing. The first desire of Touriri in every occasion will be like all his other wishes; it will be charitable and generous. You have just announced to me, Maitreya, the happiness of a great number of men, and I render thanks to you for it."

If the beard of Maitreya had been less impenetrable, the pilgrim might have caught the ghost of a smile upon the stony lips. But almost at once the hermit sank into his profound revery.

And the pilgrim returned to the city, rejoiced in advance over the marvelous benefactions in which would be manifested, without any doubt, the power of the wise Touriri.

. . . . . .

Now the next morning on waking Touriri gazed at his wife still sleeping beside him; and she, moved by a mysterious power, suddenly rose, stepped upon the window sill, and crushed her head upon the pavement of the court below.

As he stepped from his house, beggars surrounded him. He gave them not even a hard word; he even began the usual gesture toward his purse; but instantly all the beggars dropped dead.

On his way he met the dazzling Madanika, one of the most renowned courtesans of Bagdad. This man so wise did not conceal what he wanted of her. She led him to her house, where she was all compliance. After this, while she was telling Touriri the story of her life and assuring him that she was not like other women, she suddenly expired in his arms, for he continued to embrace her out of politeness.

Leaving this house, he was impeded at a crossing by

a tangle of carriages and he began to lose patience, when suddenly the drivers whose passing barred his way fell from their seats and all the horses were hamstrung as by an invisible scythe.

He entered the theater and became involved in a discussion with the cultured Carvilaka over a verse that the latter attributed to Nisami, while Touriri believed it one by Saadi, the poet of the roses. All at once, the critic grew weak and vomited blood. The comedy being given that evening had a great success and the audience greeted it with prolonged applause. Now, an instant before Touriri (I have already stated his connection with the theater) decided to applaud in his turn, the author of the piece with no warning gave up the ghost.

Touriri hastened home, horrified at this massacre, and in his despair at not understanding killed himself by plunging a poignard into his heart.

That same night the hermit Maitreya died.

. . . . . .

The two appeared together before Ormuzd.

"I shall not be sorry," thought the hermit, "to see this man treated as he deserves, whose false virtue for so long was admired by the Persians, almost as much as mine; but now, disclosing what he really was, in a single day he committed innumerable sins and murders."

But Ormuzd smiled at Touriri.

"Virtuous Touriri, mortal truly good, my gentle servant, enter into my repose."

"The pleasantry is excellent," remarked the hermit.

"Never in all my existence have I been so serious," replied Ormuzd. "You desired, Touriri, the death of

your wife because she was not gentle and because she was no longer beautiful; that of the beggars because they were insistent and evil of countenance; that of your mistress because she was stupid; of the drivers and their horses because they forced upon you a disagreeable wait; of the cultured Carvilaka because he did not share your opinion; of the author of the play because it met with more success than your own. All these desires are perfectly natural. These murders, with which Maitreya reproaches you, were the consequences of your first desires, of those desires over which no man has control. One fatally hates what annoys one; and one desires fatally the annihilation of what one hates. Nature is selfish, and the other name of selfishness is destruction. The most virtuous man begins by being a villain in his heart; and the power, if granted to a mortal, of realizing in every circumstance his first involuntary desire would soon depopulate the world. And this, Touriri, is what I intended to show by your example. It is on their second impulse only that I judge mortals; for that alone are they responsible. Without this mysterious gift which in spite of yourself made your last day so disastrous you continually led a noble life. Now, it is not your natural impulses that I should judge but your will, which was good, and which continually strove to correct your natural impulses and to perfect my complicated purpose. And that is why, my dear fellow-worker, I open my paradise to you."

"Good enough," said Maitreya, "but then what reward shall you give me?"

"The same," replied Ormuzd, "although you have only partly merited it. You have been a saint, but you

were no longer a man, except because of your pride. You succeeded in stifling in yourself all natural desires; but if all mankind should live as you did, humanity would be more quickly annihilated than if all had the miraculous and baleful power with which I for a single day afflicted my servant Touriri. Now, it pleases me that humanity shall endure, because the spectacle of it is attractive in spots—and because it entertains me. Even your effort, you miserable hermit, was not wholly without beauty, and so I pardon you its prime error. To conclude, I receive Touriri to my bosom because I am just, and I admit you to my presence, Maitreya, because I am generous."

"But"—began Maitreya.

"I have spoken!"

ON THE MARGIN OF THE RAMAYANA

TWO SANCTITIES: DIPTYCH

I. A SAINT

THE King Visvamitra nursed in his heart a great yearning for power.

As he swept over the world, followed by his army, he came upon the hermitage of the brahmin Vacichta.

The ascetic treated the king with honor. Respectfully he offered him roots, fruits, and pure water. But while they exchanged pious thoughts Vacichta received the impression that Visvamitra considered himself much more powerful than a brahmin. So to lower his pride:

"Sire," he said to him, "I have a desire to offer to you a great feast—to you and to your army."

Thereupon he called Sabala, the white cow whose teat gives to him who draws upon it everything that he may desire.

And all the army of Visvamitra was fully satisfied, having gorged on the most delicate dishes.

Visvamitra marvelled within himself.

"Holy man," he said to the brahmin, "give Sabala to me in return for a hundred thousand cows."

"Sire," answered Vacichta, "neither for a hundred thousand nor for a million of cows, nor for mountains of gold, would I give Sabala to you."

Then the king had the white cow stolen and driven away. She escaped and returned to the hermitage. And her teat, under the hand of the brahmin, produced an army that wiped out the army of Visvamitra.

Visvamitra pondered. He comprehended that supreme power is acquired only by perfection, which is victory over the senses.

After having placed one of his sons at the head of his kingdom, he retired into solitude and submitted himself to the strictest penitence.

When he believed himself perfect, he prayed to Brahma to bestow upon him the bow Vega, the weapon of the gods. Brahma granted his boon.

Armed with this miraculous bow, Visvamitra returned to the hermitage of Vacichta and shot an arrow at the holy man. But the hermit had only to raise his brahmanic staff and the divine arrow dropped powerless.

Visvamitra said to himself, "I am not yet saintly enough. I am still no more than a Kshatriya. The power of a Kshatriya is only a delusion. Only the power of a brahmin is real. I shall become a brahmin and I too shall attain the perfect union with God."

He plunged into the forest of mortifications and lacerated himself in a worthy manner.

After a thousand years of this existence, the ancestor of the worlds, Brahma, appeared and said to him:

"My son, thou art elevated to the rank of the most holy kings. Thy penance merits for thee the title of richi."

But Visvamitra received this announcement but coldly.

"Brahma," he thought, "has called me only most holy King. That is not enough."

He continued his penance.

But one day an Apsara entered his hermitage. She was beautiful and half naked. She said to him:

"I have come here because I love you."

He took her by the hand. Ten years passed and the hermit from whom this nymph had taken away his soul and his knowledge counted these ten years but as a single day.

Then, realizing his transformation and angered only at himself he sent Apsara away with affectionate words.

He resumed his pious practices with his arms raised in the air, standing on one foot, motionless as a shaft of marble, burned by the sun or drenched by the rain, and having for nourishment only the winds of heaven.

His penance was so strict that even the gods were frightened. They sent to him another Apsara, more ravishing than the first. But this time he suspected.

"Thou who desirest to tempt me," he cried, "shalt be changed into a rock to remain in this forest of mortifications."

But hardly had he transformed her into a sterile rock than he was seized by a poignant grief, for he saw that he had surrendered to a moment of anger.

"I have not yet vanquished my senses," he murmured.

He resumed his penance and remained silent and motionless for a thousand years.

When the gods beheld the anchorite without anger, without love, with a soul absolutely tranquil, at last so near to supreme perfection, they appeared at the palace of Brahma.

"May this saint," they said, "obtain the boon that

he craves before he conceive the desire to conquer the kingdom of heaven."

And all the choirs of the immortals, Brahma at their head, moved to the hermitage of Visvamitra and thus addressed him:

"Richi-brahmin, cease thy triumphant bodily torments for thou hast attained to the brahmarshitvat."

And Visvamitra, elevated to the rank of brahmin, moved through the earth with a spirit just and perfect.

II. A SAINTED WOMAN

Bertile was born of poor peasants.

She was not very beautiful but she had a charming little face with eyes so sweet that no one could look at her without loving her. She was a good obedient little girl who helped her mother in the tasks of the house as well as she could.

Best of all she loved flowers and animals. The birds of the garden flew to perch on her head, her shoulders, and her fingers. When she milked the cow in the stable it lowed tenderly and turning its head tried to lick her.

Bertile loved everyone but especially the sick and suffering. She shared her bread with the beggars who passed and went into the houses where there were sick to help as her strength permitted.

When she became old enough to understand the meaning of the Christ and redemption, she loved Jesus beyond everything because He had loved men until His death; but she loved men more and more because they had been loved of Jesus; and she did not know herself

whether her charity was born of her piety, or her piety of her charity.

In the fields and the borders of the roads where she led her cow and goat to pasture she prayed all day long. And without doubt this little peasant had more sensitiveness and imagination than a great painter or poet, for the things of which she thought—the miseries of man, the life of Jesus, the scenes of His Passion—appeared to her in such detail and in such vividness that she could hardly restrain herself from tears.

When she passed into womanhood she hardly perceived the change in herself. And because she loved Jesus and all mankind in Him she was never tempted to love a man.

One day while gathering wood in the forest she met a fine gentleman who tried first to seduce her by gentle speeches and then tried to take her by force. But on the instant he was smitten with paralysis, and he did not recover his power of movement until Bertile had prayed for him and he had repented aloud for his evil [illegible]ct.

[illegible]e was a peasant, active and strong in labor and hardened by all the toils of the fields. But she took communion every morning with tears in her eyes. She passed every Sunday at church. She gave to others all she had. She was indifferent to the taste of her food and drink. If the lord of the district committed an unjust act, she went to him with a reproof in the name of Jesus, and sometimes she obtained justice. At other times she was beaten and turned out by the retainers, but never did she complain.

One day a barbarian king arrived in the country at

the head of his army. Bertile went to meet him and said:

"Sire, the inhabitants of this village are only poor people. I adjure you, by Our Lord, to do them no injury. But there is, ten leagues from here, a desert land that would be very fertile if it were tilled. Go there and camp with your soldiers."

The barbarian king listened to her with amazement. He found her so unusual that he believed what she said. And he discovered ten leagues distant a district that had been formerly only waste but now appeared miraculously fertile and rich, according to the will of God and the word of His servant.

Nevertheless Bertile increased in the desire to suffer with Jesus, first because of the love she bore Him and because of the joy of suffering as He had, and also for the love of men and the thought of expiation for them.

This is why, at her eighteenth year, bloody and painful wounds appeared in her hands, her feet, in her side, and upon her brow. And every Friday these wounds bled more copiously and pained more sharply. Because of this a divine ecstasy illumined her countenance.

She gathered about her widows and young maidens and taught them how to care for babies, the sick, and the old. And often she healed the sick by the laying on of hands.

She died at twenty, having for divine love and by voluntary suffering struggled against the suffering of others and having, so far as one person is able, redeemed the world.

And her peasant limbs accustomed to the heaviest labor, her feet calloused on the roads in her search for

objects of her ministrations, her hands bathed in all the running sores of human misery, her whole wasted body in which not a thing of beauty remained except her eyes and the fold of her mouth, remained incorruptible and spread a perfume sweeter than the scent of lilies and roses.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE ÆNEID

IN THE WOODEN HORSE

"AS you wish it," said Ulysses to King Alcinous, "I shall tell you another story.

"We had been besieging Troy for ten years and were despairing of ever capturing it when chaste Pallas inspired in us the idea of a ruse. We constructed a huge horse of wood and then we spread the report that we were going to offer this horse to Pallas to induce her to watch over our return to our homes.

"This colossus was the work of the ingenious Epeus. It was some fifty feet long, some twelve wide, and its belly was twenty-five feet above the ground. It had a great open mouth, so that the men concealed within could breathe and see a little. And to make it more beautiful Epeus had cunningly wrought teeth of silver and eyes of precious stones.

"The interior was comfortably arranged. There were benches for sitting and straps for suspending weapons and garments. A trapdoor was cut in the monster's belly; in its flanks, artistically curved, were holes through which one could see all that went on outside.

"Having been chosen by fate with Menelaus, Thermander, Sthenelus, Thoas, Acamas, Pyrrhus, Epeus, and Machaon, I passed through the trapdoor into the stomach of the colossus. We carried covers, skins of wine, and provisions of bread and salt flesh.

"At the same time, the army of the Greeks, after

having burned the tents, boarded the ships, quit the Trojan shore, and sailed away to hide behind the island of Tenedos.

"Only the giant steed stood on the deserted sands, beneath the burning sun. We held our breath, anxious, for we could not guess what might happen to us, whether we should sally forth from our hollow ambush to victory or to death.

"At first the wait seemed unending.

" 'If we could only,' said Pyrrhus, 'cast dice! But it isn't light enough in this cavern to count the marks.'

"The heat became unbearable.

" 'Let us drink,' advised Acamas; 'we have the wine.'

" 'You are mad,' I answered him, 'we shall need all our wits.'

"At last we heard a great confused murmur. Through the peepholes we could see the Trojans swarming joyously across the sands towards the camp of the Greeks. When they caught sight of the horse, they cried out in astonishment. Thyrnetus, one of their chiefs, counseled the Trojans to drag this marvelous work dedicated to Pallas within their walls. But Capys, more prudent, wanted them to destroy this monster. The priest Laocoön seconded this advice and even hurled against the colossus a javelin that pierced the maple wall and pricked the shoulder of one of my companions.

" 'Accursed priest,' I muttered half aloud.

" 'We're lost,' said Menelaus.

" 'What is Sinon doing?'

"And silently everyone of us drew his sword from its sheath or gripped his lance in his hand.

"But just then, some Trojan horsemen led in a man whom they had just surprised hidden in the brambles. It was Sinon, our comrade. He played his rôle excellently. He wept, threw himself to his knees, and tore his face with his nails. We heard him tell how he hated us; how we had chosen him as a sacrifice, in order to obtain a happy return from the gods, but that he had managed to escape; how moreover Pallas was angered at us because of our theft of the Palladium and to appease her we were offering this ingenious figure of a giant horse.

" 'Kind Trojans,' he pleaded, 'if you profane this gift to Pallas, the greatest misfortunes await you; but if this statue be drawn into your city, all Asia will rise with you against the Greeks. Thus has the oracle of Apollo spoken.'

"The Trojans still hesitated. We could see through the peepholes the undecided movements of the crowd, and I thought, 'It will never work! It's too tall a tale.' And I remembered Penelope seated at her spinning wheel and my little Telemachus playing in the courtyard of my house, and I made ready to die.

"Laocoön, however, never stopped crying to the Trojans, 'My people, you are being tricked!' From the interior of our prison we overwhelmed this babbler with our silent curses.

"But two serpents from Tenedos uncoiled their rings upon the sea and advanced straight toward the shore. They raised their bloody crests high, their bodies surged in twisting arcs. In their mouths trembled their triple pointed tongues. Straight to Laocoön they moved and coiled in two bands around his legs, his arms, his body,

and his neck. Above his head they swayed their hissing heads. He tugged with his hands to resist their loops, shrieking despairingly to heaven. But soon he was silent. . . . Tranquilly the two serpents returned to the sea.

"'Perfect!' said Machaon near me. 'This priest has failed.'

"'Shall we drink?' asked Acamas.

"'Not yet,' I answered.

"But the Trojans hesitated no longer. They cried that Laocoön had been punished for hurling the javelin against the sacred horse; they must draw the colossus into the citadel where the images of the gods are guarded, and appease the wrath of Pallas by prayer.

"'It's working!' Thermander said to me.

"And I replied, 'Whom the gods intend to destroy, they first make mad.'

"The Trojans did prepare their own ruin with an amazing activity.

"Some razed a section of the wall to make a passage. Others fastened cables to the neck of the horse. Carpenters and blacksmiths with levers raised the four feet of the monster and fastened to each hoof an axle with a wheel made of heart of oak.

"All this was not accomplished without disturbing a little our equilibrium, and this made me remark to my companions:

"'Let us wrap our weapons in their covers, so that the rattling of the metal won't betray us.'

"The crowd tugged at the ropes. The machine jolted and moved. Children and maidens escorted it with dances and songs.

"'Everything's going well,' said Acamas. 'Let's drink.'

"'To the health of the beautiful young girls of Troy!' added young Pyrrhus.

"I allowed them to open one of the leather bottles. We passed it from hand to hand. Acamas drank deeper than any other of my comrades, for he loved wine to excess and did not know how to control his thirst.

"Meanwhile we rolled on towards the city, at times so jolted that we were thrown against one another. But we sorted ourselves and stifled our laughter.

"The horse crossed the boundary. The Trojans installed it within the citadel before the Temple of Pallas and at last did us the favor of departing. They scattered about the city to celebrate the arrival of the horse by feats, never suspecting that they were celebrating their own deaths.

"Night fell. Our airy cavern became black. But we rejoiced in the knowledge that at that same hour the Greeks were leaving Tenedos and in their ships making for the Trojan shore.

"We were completely alone. But the noises of the city still came to us, so that we dared not yet sally out from our covert.

"We ate by feeling about. Acamas no doubt took advantage of the darkness to drink more than was good for him, for suddenly he began to talk in a loud voice, then to roar drinking songs.

"All of us trembled lest some Trojan wandering near should hear and run to warn his fellow townsmen that some one was singing in the belly of the horse.

"It was impossible by persuasion to make Acamas keep silent, and it was not easy in the opaque darkness to shut him up by force. A demon possessed this drunkard. Guided by the noise he made I tried to seize him, but when I thought I had him, I discovered it was some one else. Enraged by our warnings and threats he had drawn his sword and was laying about blindly. We learned this, not by seeing but by feeling several sharp wounds from his aimless thrusts. Some of the wounded could not restrain their cries. And the drunkard kept on yelling his songs. We bumped one another about in the darkness and when in all this confusion and terror my hands touched faces or arms I drew them away wet with the blood that I could not see. We were lost. We seemed to hear someone approaching.

"Then a god inspired me with an ingenious device. I hurried to one end of our prison and leaned against the wall. I called everyone of my companions by name—Acamas excepted. When I was sure that all of them were beside me and that the drunkard was separated from our group I crawled along the planks until I came against the legs of Acamas. Then he fought in vain. My hands mounted quickly along his body—up to his throat. I pressed with all my strength. He collapsed. His feet still moved a little, but not for long. Without doubt some jealous god was appeased by the death of Acamas, for from then on we were triumphant.

"There was only a deep silence. The Trojans had gone to bed. Through the narrow slits we gazed towards the sea. A torch blazed upon the prow of a

vessel. It was the signal. What joy! Raising the trapdoor we slipped down a rope. We slipped through the town plunged in sleep and wine. We slit the throats of the sentinels, we opened the gates, and let in the army of the Greeks."

SISTER ANNA

AFTER she had hurled her last curse at her departing lover, Dido plunged a dagger in her bosom and fell upon her garlanded pyre.

Her attendants, astonished, uttered piercing shrieks. Her sister Anna ran to the noise.

"Oh!" she cried, "you have tricked me! You told me you were going to burn the portrait and the other souvenirs of the Trojan, and you took advantage of my absence to mount your death-bed alone. Woe is me! With the blow you gave yourself you have also struck me, you have killed me, your people, your Senate, and your city. But bring me water that I may bathe the wound. If a last sigh finds its way through her lips, let my mouth receive it."

With these words Anna mounted the steps of the pyre, clasped her sister in her arms, and with her veil stanched the blood that still oozed from the wound.

Dido still breathed. Anna had her carried to her chamber. An old Egyptian, skilled in herbs and ointments, bandaged the unfortunate Queen. And throughout the land sacrifices were offered to the gods for her recovery.

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After fifteen days of extreme uncertainty and suspended trembling life Dido opened her eyes one morning, looked round her, and spoke.

"Where am I?"

"At home, your palace in Carthage," replied her sister. "You are beautiful, still young, you are the Queen, and you live:—not trifles, by any means."

Dido's eyes wandered for a time. Suddenly she remembered and burst into tears.

"Oh," she pleaded, "why did you not let me die?"

Anna answered her.

"Because life is a splendid thing and the condition of all the rest of us."

Thereupon she had some delicate food brought.

"Why this?" asked the invalid.

Nevertheless, she consented to eat, and did it with some pleasure. Then she was placed upon a terrace facing the south so that she could see the city and the harbor. She appeared to enjoy the sun and the gay aspect of her young capital. She named the temples and the other buildings. Flowers were brought to her. She examined them with delight and fondled them with her pale fingers. She watched the birds fly and the sails move across the water. She made the childish discovery of the world again.

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Some days later when her strength had returned she passed through the streets of Carthage in a litter with her sister. She was interested in the new buildings. The reception by the crowds pleased her.

"It is true," she remarked. "I have duties to my people."

"True," replied Anna. "In busying yourself by being Queen, you will soon forget your adventure. And after all, it was not out of the ordinary. Certainly it was not enough to kill oneself over."

"Tell on, Sister. It is easy to see that you have never loved."

"You are mistaken," corrected Anna. "You were too absorbed to take any notice; but I was not insensible to the charms of Achates, the confidant of the Trojan chieftain. In the depths of the deserted valley where the storm overtook us and dispersed the hunters, there are two caves. You entered one; but I took shelter with the faithful Achates in the other. He was charming; and yet, as you see, I am consoled. Follow my example, Sister."

"But your Achates was a man of no distinction. I can hardly recall his features. He does not seem to have lived a life of any account."

"Ho!" uttered Anna. "And was Æneas so irresistible? He was always calling on the gods and talked only of his tribulations. He was more like a priest than a king."

"You do not understand," explained the Queen. "These pious and serious men have strange attractions."

"When one is so serious, one is all the more to blame for breaking one's word and behaving towards women like common mortals."

"You are right there; his conduct is inexcusable."

"Happily, he did not do all the evil he might have done. Suppose you had married him? That would have meant war with Iarbas."

"Iarbas? What became of him?"

"I do not know. But he was a gallant man. You repulsed him then when he sued for your hand."

"I swore to remain faithful to Sychæus, my first husband."

"But you did not keep your word, because mortals are the playthings of fate. Iarbas might have revenged himself and invaded your kingdom. He did not. I believe that in spite of everything he does not hate you. Do you want me to find out about it?"

Dido indignantly repudiated such an idea.

"Never speak to me of Iarbas! I have enough sorrow in my sad life!"

"Tut, tut!" said Anna. "These are wild statements."

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In the meantime Dido regained her taste for living. She busied herself with her appearance and with the governing of her people. She visited the public works under construction and encouraged the workmen. She often passed her small army in review. She continually convened her Senate and submitted to it countless suggestions for laws. She was happy in being Queen.

One day she spoke to her sister.

"And Iarbas?"

"You forbade me to speak of him to you," said Anna. "But it's my opinion that if you wish to assure your kingdom tranquillity and permanence you can do no better than to form a loyal alliance with the King of Numidia. I doubt if he will accept such an alliance in any other form than marriage."

"He is making a great mistake if he counts on forcing me into it," replied the Queen. "None the less,

there is some truth in what you say. It would be a good thing if I were informed of the secret movements of the King of Numidia. Dearest Anna, you used to be my most tireless messenger. Would you not like to go find Iarbas and ask him—"

"I have already seen him," Anna observed simply.

"What?" said Dido, hardly surprised.

"Iarbas has always loved you, and not coldly, as did the other, but with a really African passion. He is prepared to marry you. But if you still refuse, he swears that he will burn your city and slay the inhabitants. And he is capable of doing all that he promises."

"He is a man!" exclaimed the Queen. "What he suggests deserves consideration. Not that I love him!"

"That is not essential. Iarbas offers to me the hand of the Captain of his Guards—his best friend."

"Another Achates?" smiled the Queen.

"If you please. Oh! he awakens only mild feelings in me. But you must realize, my dear sister, that with us our best days are past. We know now that love brings more griefs than joys. To court adventures one must be at the summit of power, and when one has more years to live than one has already lived. You are close to forty and I am only a year your junior. We have just seen our last flame die out (yours was the brightest, but I had my own as well). Now it becomes us to be sensible, and with that, to be happy without excesses, but with fewer risks."

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"But—my legend," objected Dido.

"What? Your legend?"

"I know the opinion that men will have of me and the stories of my adventure that they will relate. Women win fame not by the moderate sentiments they display, but by the extraordinary excesses of their hearts and by their extravagant actions. If they know that I have survived the flight of my lover, and that I have taken a husband, I shall be dishonored in the eyes of the coming centuries."

"Do not worry," replied Anna. "Your legend is complete. The Trojans believe in your suicide, for it flatters them. Their poets will sing of it. The future will remember of you only your burning shrieks, your arms stretched toward the sea, the wound in your breast, your glazed eyes, and your violet lips. And it will ignore the fact that you shall have passed the second half of your life under this dazzling sun, the sight of which is the greatest of all delights, and which the dead never see again."

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The marriage of Dido with Iarbas and that of Anna with the Captain of the Guard were celebrated on the same day.

Dido was happy. Her calm joy made her indulgent toward Æneas. Then her governmental duties made her comprehend better the reasons of state and in consequence the excellent deceit of the son of Anchises.

"I am no longer provoked at him," she said. "He had his gods, his duty, and his destiny, as I have mine. Besides, I must confess, my meeting with him, our love, and his flight now seem to me far off events in which I am only slightly interested. My body is no longer the same; my blood, slowly renewed after my

illness, is no longer the blood that surged towards the Trojan, the blood I spilled upon the funeral pyre."

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One day a Phœnician merchant, traveling from Italy, where he had some trade, landed at Carthage.

Dido had him summoned, questioned him, and learned that the King of the Trojans over yonder was warring against the people of Latium, and that his affairs were going pretty badly.

"Poor man!" she said. "When you see him again, my friend, tell him that Dido did not die; that she wed the King of the Numidians, and that she is radiantly happy. Tell him exactly that. I insist that he know this. It is essential."

"But your legend?" asked Anna.

"What? My legend? I prefer history," said the Queen, turning to the stalwart Iarbas.

PALLAS, SON OF EVANDER

PALLAS was eighteen years old. His father, Evander, was King of Pallanteus, an arcadian colony. The inhabitants of this little kingdom led a simple and rustic existence; at once laborers, hunters, and soldiers, for they were continually exposed to the attacks of the Volsci and the Rutulians.

A grave and pious child, Pallas believed with a profound faith in the wonderful destiny of his tiny land.

Pallanteus was a village in the fields on the banks of the Tiber. Even the house of the King had only a roof of thatch. But this corner of the earth was furnished with mysterious powers and consecrated by moving predictions. A wood near the village inspired particular veneration. The Arcadians said: "No one knows which god; but a god inhabits it." This wood marked the site of the future city of Rome. But at that time the wolves prowled about and the martins dug their burrows under the overhanging pile that was to be the Tarpeian Rock; and the Capitoline was merely a stretch marked by savage tufts of bushes.

An oracle said that happy times would begin for Pallas on the "day when a serpent of gold should come from the sea across the forest to the city." And that is why on his hunts or strolls on the hills Pallas often looked for the "serpent of gold."

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Meanwhile Æneas had landed on the italic peninsula. Counselled in a dream by that god of the Tiber, he sailed up the river with three galleys manned by soldiers, to go to Pallas and win an alliance with the King of the Arcadians. And the solitary waves of the river and the forests that shaded the two banks were amazed at the brilliance of the Trojan shields and at the painting that decorated the ships.

Now, on that day, King Evander and his companions were celebrating in a clearing with a great meal the feast of their former guest Hercules. Pallas was the first to see the fleet of painted ships, ringed with brilliant shields and shining weapons, seeming to wind among the huge trees. He cried out:

"The hour has come. Behold the serpent of gold!"

Evander welcomed Æneas with great honor. While the Arcadians were seated on the grass, he provided for the chief a chair of maple covered with the skin of a lion. He showed him about his rustic kingdom and made a loyal alliance with him.

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Pallas was happy. He rode a good horse; and the King Æneas presented him with shining arms, such as the rustic craftsmen could not fashion. He knew why he was alive. He knew that his death as his life would serve some great purpose, and that his fame should live after him. He rode to battle as to a sacred orgy.

In one of his first engagements he found himself face to face with a young Rutulian horseman, beautiful of countenance, who provoked him with violent words in harmonious tones. Pallas did his best, but after a few passages of arms he received in his thigh a deep

wound. Falling from his horse he lost a great deal of blood and fainted.

Some hours later he regained his senses in a solid enclosure of stakes guarded by archers, where the Rutulians had confined the captives of importance, for the useful exchanges.

An old woman came to bandage his wound. He was not maltreated, not more than the other prisoners. Wine was given them and hunks of meat were flung to them.

The next day a young girl entered the enclosure, accompanied by two huge dogs. She was garbed in a military tunic; but her throat swelled beneath the coarse wool; her mouth was delicate and pure; and heavy blond curls covered her little serious head.

It was the amazon Camilla, ally of the Rutulians.

Pallas recognized in her the young horsemen who had wounded him the day before with a lance thrust.

Camilla announced to the captives that as the exchange had been concluded they might return to the Trojan camp. She hardly glanced at them, and left the enclosure after calling her dogs.

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Pallas remained in bed for a whole week (for his wound was not yet healed) in the hut palace of King Evander. His father consoled him and counselled patience; and the young Ascanius kept him company. But the youth was sad. He felt keenly the shame of having been worsted by a woman, nor could he keep his mind from brooding on it.

Cured, he poured upon a rock in the clearing libations of milk and wine to the unnamed god of the

forest where Rome would one day rise. Then he returned to the battle with an absorbing desire of vengeance.

In the thickest of the mêlée not far from the place where he had met her he saw Camilla in combat against a Trojan horseman named Dares. He spurred his horse and arrived just as Dares, having unhorsed Camilla, had her at his mercy.

Pallas cried, "Kill! Kill!" But he saw the mouth and the eyes of the Amazon; and as though some one else were acting for him he turned from her breast her adversary's lance; and this delay permitted the maiden to seat herself securely and to give Dares a mortal wound.

Pallas saw him slide to the earth, move his legs and arms for a few moments, then render up his spirit in a flood of blood. Horrified at what he had done, he wished to overtake Camilla and revenge the death of his companion upon her; but the blond horsewoman had disappeared.

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Each army retired to its camp. The battle remained undecided.

No Trojan had seen Pallas turn the iron that had menaced Camilla and none understood the bitter grief of the son of Evander and his silent despair.

Pallas believed that he had committed a double crime against his country and the gods in prolonging the days of one of its enemies and in causing the death of one of its defenders. But he knew well that he had not consented to these two crimes. He concluded that

he was possessed by some demon hostile to the grandeur of the arcadian city.

Vainly, to deliver himself from this sacrilege, did he purify himself in the springs of the sacred wood, consult sorcerers, drink potions, and repeat magic charms. The ghost of Dares haunted his nights; but more often in his dreams he saw Camilla as she had appeared in the enclosure of the captives with her legs bare, her figure free, her eyes softened by the shade of her curls. She would approach him; and in spite of himself, he would stretch his arms towards this beautiful enemy. And when day came, he recalled this dream and forced himself to be indignant at it, until night came again.

He believed then that the demon who possessed him would never again let him raise his sword against this woman, nor his javelin, nor his lance, and that only one way remained for him to free himself of this possession. Only by his own blood could he appease the manes of Dares, escape Camilla and the evil influence of her beauty, expiate the wrong he had done to his country, and bring upon his land again the favor of the gods.

He resolved to die.

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That day Pallas fought furiously.

The first that fate brought to his blows was Lagus. Lagus tried to raise a huge rock when the son of Evander thrust his javelin between his shoulder blades. The vanquisher stooped to draw his weapon, stopped by the backbone; Hisbon thought he could surprise him, and dashed upon him; but Pallas turned quickly

and plunged his sword into his entrails. Sthenelus followed Hisbon. And you, you others fell among the Rutulian fields:—Laris and Thymbes, striking twins, so much alike that your parents confused you. But the sword of Pallas made a difference between you; for he severed the head of Thymbes and smote off the hand of Laris. Separated from the arm it tried to rejoin it and still moved its fingers to grasp the weapon.

At that moment Pallas saw Camilla, who having lost her horse, was running, holding her sword before her.

The son of Evander, with his arms spread wide and his chest uncovered, threw himself with all his energy upon the extended sword, calling at the same time upon the gods.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE GOSPELS

THE VIRGIN OF THE ANGELS

DURING the eight days that she passed in the stable at Bethlehem Mary did not suffer very much. Shepherds brought cheeses, fruits, bread, and firewood. Their wives and daughters cared for the child and gave to Mary the attentions needed by a new mother. Then the Magi left behind their gifts of carpets, precious stuffs, jewels, and vases of gold.

At the end of the week when she was able to walk Mary wanted to return to her home in Nazareth. Some shepherds volunteered to escort her, but she said to them:

"I don't want you to leave your flocks and fields for us. My son will direct us."

"But," said Joseph, "shall we leave behind the gifts of the Magi?"

"Yes," said Mary, "since we can't carry them away with us."

"But they're worth a great deal of silver," said Joseph.

"So much the better," said Mary.

And she distributed the gifts of the Magi among the shepherds.

"But," persisted Joseph, "can't we keep just a few for ourselves?"

"What should we do with them?" replied Mary. "We have a greater treasure."

It was hot on the journey. Mary carried the child

in her arms; Joseph carried a basket filled with a little linen and scanty provisions. Toward noon they halted, fatigued, at the margin of a wood.

Immediately from behind the trees appeared a band of tiny angels. They were chubby youngsters, pink and round-faced. On their backs were little wings which helped them to fly when they wished and which at other times made their movements easy and light. They were skilful and vigorous beyond anything their tender age and delicate figures would lead one to believe.

They offered to the travelers a jar of fresh water and fruit which they had gathered no one knew where.

When the holy family resumed their journey the angels followed. They relieved Joseph of his basket, and Joseph allowed them to carry it. But Mary would not let them have the child.

When night fell the angels arranged beds of moss beneath a wide sycamore and all through the night they watched over the slumber of Jesus.

So Mary returned to her home in Nazareth. It was a white house with a flat roof in a populous narrow way. There was a little covered terrace where Joseph had his workshop.

The angels did not leave them but continued to make themselves useful in a thousand ways. When the child cried, one of them gently rocked him; others made music upon tiny harps for him; or when it was necessary changed his wrappings with the wave of a hand. When Mary awoke in the mornings she found her chamber swept. After every meal they speedily carried out the dishes and bowls, ran to wash them at

the near-by fountain, and ranged them in the cupboard. When the Virgin went to the washhouse they carried the package of linen, divided it among them, joyously pounded the wet garments, dried them on the stones, and carried the bundle home. And if Mary in spinning her distaff grew drowsy from the great heat, they finished her task without waking her.

They displayed no less care of Joseph. They handed him his tools, arranged them after the work was finished, carried away the chips and shavings, and kept the shop in irreproachable order.

But, too well served by the angels and having almost nothing to do, Mary became bored.

Because she felt bored, she prayed at first; but while she prayed, she reflected.

One morning as she was getting up she saw the angels sweeping her chamber. She snatched the broom and threatened to chase them out. They scattered. But after dinner at noon, as they started to clear the table she gave one a smart rap on his fingers and this put all of them to flight. They returned shortly. When she began to spin an angel tried to take her spindle. She brandished it like a weapon and chased the intruder to the door of Joseph's shop. An hour later as she was seated beside the child sewing she spied two angels who had slipped under the cradle and were slyly rocking it. She rose, turned them out of the room and slammed the door so violently that one of the angels was caught by the tip of a wing. He uttered a little cry. Mary released him, but she said:

"So much the worse for you. That will teach you to meddle in what doesn't concern you. Tell your

companions and don't let me see any of you again!"

"But," said Joseph, "why do you drive these little creatures away? They help us a great deal."

"That's just the reason," Mary replied.

"I don't understand," Joseph continued. "Since your son is the Messiah, it's perfectly natural that he should be served by angels, and that his mother should profit by it."

"Oh!" said Mary, "here are words with no meaning. Don't you know that the Messiah has come into the world to suffer with men and first of all to endure all the ills natural to babies? And all these sufferings, I should be able to relieve as much as is in me, since I'm his mother. But I don't want anybody else to take care of these matters. Don't other mothers care for their own children? What a coward I should be if I avoided my share of a mother's trials. Besides, I'm sure my baby would rather be tended by me than by those winged brats. And I know that I shall be more closely associated with his redeeming spirit if as other women I suffer from accepting completely his human condition. Yes, I wish to be the only one to dress my son, the only one to rock him to sleep, the only one to keep my house, the only one to use my distaff, the only one to go to the washhouse. And as these humble tasks are almost a joy, they will bring no great merit to me, I'm sure; but I should be blamed if I let angels do them for me. Do you understand?"

"I think I do, my dear girl. . . . But must I also give up the little services the angels perform for me?"

"Evidently, my friend."

"Well, I thought that being the husband of the

mother of the Messiah would give me the right to some slight advantages. But you must be right: for you are more intelligent and wiser than I am, although you're only fifteen years old and I'm past sixty."

Now, the next night, as the infant Jesus cried and refused to go to sleep, suddenly there was heard in the street a delicately soothing melody.

Mary opened the casement and saw by the light of the moon, standing against the wall of the house, all the angels playing on their tiny harps.

"You again?" she called to them. "Suppose my baby doesn't want to go to sleep? Suppose it pleases him to cry and suffer with his teeth? Isn't his mother with him, eh? Clear out, now, or I'll get angry!"

On the morrow they did not reappear during the entire day. But the day after Mary saw them in the courtyard huddled together under the fig-tree, timid, shame-faced, and weeping silently.

"My little angels," she said to them, "I may seem severe to you because you are too young to understand. But listen now! Old Sephora who lives across the way is paralyzed. A little further along is good Rachel with twelve children—and a hard time in rearing them. And you will find in Nazareth enough other unfortunate women. Well, then, you should help them to keep house, to wash clothes, to tend their babies. Since you desire to please my son, that's the best way to succeed."

And noticing their little noses wrinkled with chagrin, she added:

"And when he is bigger, perhaps I'll let you play with him. But first, do what I've just told you."

And that year all the poor women and the sick of Nazareth were aided and all the little babies rocked by these invisible servants (for only Mary and Joseph could see the angels); and none of the sucking infants cried at all, except the baby Jesus who wished to suffer for them.

THE INFANT AND THE GOOD MASON

(*A Christmas Story*)

MONSIEUR DURAND, dealer in dress goods, was a citizen of note in his small city.

He had a good wife and two charming children—Lily and Zezè.

City alderman, secret aspirant for the post of district representative, he had joined the Lodge. But he carefully kept this a secret, because of his patrons.

Certainly he was an enemy of superstition. But he cared a great deal for peace in his household: he let his wife go to church and had let her take charge of the education of the children until their first communion.

"When they're old enough," he assured himself, "I'll give them an education based on scientific principles."

It was Christmas Eve. As in other years Lily and Zezè set up in their room on the marble top of the dresser a wonderfully beautiful crib: the infant Jesus in wax, and around Him the Virgin, Saint Joseph, the ass, the ox, and a few shepherds, vases with flowers, and even two pink candles.

M. Durand was at his shop; Mme. Durand was about to go out on some errands.

"Oh, Mother," pleaded Lily, "give me some ribbons

and pieces of cloth to make the crib still more beautiful and to dress the persons better."

"You'll find them," replied Mme. Durand, "in the bottom of the closet at the left. Don't disarrange the linen, and be good children, both of you."

Lily found in the spot indicated a pile of ribbons and cuttings, all of which she considered too tame.

She pushed her search further and ended by dragging forth from behind a pile of cloth two singular and sumptuous articles at which she cried out with delight.

They were a scarf and a kind of little apron of blue silk, embroidered with designs in gold representing an eye in a triangle, and a temple with columns, snakes, branches of acacia and death's heads above crossed bones. Apparently M. Durand was one of the high dignitaries of the Lodge. Chevalier of the Serpent in the Grass? Who knows?

"Lovely!" said Zezè.

"They look," Lily remarked soberly, "like religious articles."

She spread the silk apron beneath the infant Jesus. As the scarf was long she cut it into two pieces, and draped it like a stole around the Virgin and Saint Joseph. She tied ordinary ribbons around the necks of the ass, the ox, and the shepherds; then she gazed at her work with supreme satisfaction.

Mme. Durand returned.

"Oh, Mama!" cried Lily. "Just see what we found in the closet!"

Mme. Durand recognized the masonic insignia of

her husband, but she merely smiled, reflected for a moment, then said to the children:

"Magnificent, really! You've never had so beautiful a crib. But above all, my dears, don't say a word about it this evening to your father. Keep the surprise until tomorrow morning."

After dinner M. Durand said to his wife:

"My dear, I have an engagement at the Café du Commerce—with some customers—some important business."

"A card game, doubtless?"

M. Durand merely shrugged his shoulders.

In reality, there was to be that evening at the Lodge a solemn reunion. A new brother was to be initiated. All the "masters" were to attend in full regalia. M. Durand would not miss such a grand ceremony for anything.

He went into his room, opened the closet, and fumbled about for a long time. Quite disturbed he turned to all the hiding places in the house;—the closet in the small entrance hall, the small bookcase in the living-room, and even the drawers of the buffet in the dining-room. But, thanks to the Heavens above, he never dreamed of going into the children's room.

"What are you hunting for?" Mme. Durand asked sweetly.

"Oh—nothing you'd know about," M. Durand replied.

He began his search again, this time methodically, but with no more success. Then he lost his temper, turned the contents of the closet topsy-turvy, toppled

over the piles of white lavender-scented linen and straightened them again with vicious punches.

It grew late. The children were put to bed. Mme. Durand embroidered in the lamplight with an angelic smile.

"Well," demanded M. Durand, "do you know what's become—"

"What, my dear?"

"Oh, nothing. Something of mine."

"You know, my dear, I never touch anything of yours."

M. Durand, worn out, ended by going to bed grumbling.

In the morning of the next day, Christmas, M. Durand with no work at the store went into the children's room.

Before the dresser where the crib shone between the two lighted candles, Lily and Zezè were on their knees with clasped hands, while Mme. Durand prompted them in their prayers.

"God . . . grant health to . . . papa . . . to mama."

But these agreeable wishes lisped by innocent lips made slight impression on the Chevalier of the Serpent in the Grass. At the first glance he had discovered under the wax Jesus and on the shoulders of Mary and Joseph the regalia that was his pride. He turned pale and cried:

"That's stupid!"

Then turning to his wife:

"You—you gave them these . . . these . . ."

"These what, my dear?"

"Well—these things."

"No, my dear. It was Lily who dug them out of the closet."

"And you let—"

"I had nothing to do with letting her. I was out of the house at the time."

"But you could have taken them away from her."

"I didn't have the heart, my dear. She was so pleased with them!"

"Stupid!"

"What is it, Papa?" Lily asked.

"Explain to them, my dear," urged Mme. Durand, whose voice grew sweeter and sweeter.

But M. Durand did not deign to respond.

"Then I'll explain," said Mme. Durand. "Listen, Lily. You have often asked me why Father never goes to church. Well, he goes to his own—the church of men. And there he wears these beautiful articles."

"You're fixing it up beautifully!" interrupted M. Durand.

"What do you want me to tell them? Besides, my dear, you've often assured me that all religions are equal. That's not my opinion; but you say so. So you have your religion and we have ours."

"Excuse me! I have none."

"Are you sure?"

"And besides;—but enough of this useless talk!" concluded M. Durand.

And he made a movement to pull away the apron and the scarf.

"Oh, Papa!" wailed Lily. "Please let us have these beautiful things!"

And with a charming pout that she knew was irresistible she embraced his knees.

"No! no! no. Your mother spoils you in all your pranks. But this time you've gone beyond the limit!"

He appeared quite angry. Lily burst into tears, and Zezè imitated her at once.

M. Durand, a good Mason but a weak father, could not endure this sight, so he began to console the two children.

But suddenly seized with terror:

"At least," he said to his wife, "Lily must not show the crib to her playmates, and she mustn't tell about it? Because, you understand if this gets out, I'll get mine soon enough."

"Don't worry. Lily won't say anything."

"Oh, no, Papa."

"Then—"

"Oh, Papa; how good you are!" exclaimed Lily, throwing herself into her father's arms.

"After all," soliloquized M. Durand, "if my tolerance is excessive, it's not absurd. This Jesus was a thinker of some merit, for His times. He hated priests. Like us He preached liberty, equality, and fraternity."

And M. Durand went on in this vein while Mme. Durand still smiling combed Lily's hair and Zezè seated on the floor built a straggling castle with little wooden blocks.

"Papa," Lily suddenly said through her curls, "I'm certain that the infant Jesus will bless you."

Lily, as you will see, was not mistaken.

The next afternoon at the time for the apéritif, the

Café of Commerce was more animated than usual. The habitués were passing a photograph about. It must have been extremely comic, for those who looked at it immediately burst into guffaws.

"Look! That one!—He belongs then?—Ah! the sly dog!—And that one, who looks like a priest.—You don't recognize him?—Oh! the jokers!"

And from all the corners of the café the curious stretched above the shoulders of the first ones to see the amusing document. Only a few drinkers with set faces pretended to be absorbed in their card games or in their newspapers.

I must tell you without any more delay that this photograph showed the members of the Lodge decked out in their aprons and scarfs, brandishing their leaden swords, all bizarre, solemn, and ridiculous.

The snap-shot had been taken at the gathering of the night before, I don't know how, by some concealed practical joker or by some treacherous brother; this point doubtless would never be cleared up.

M. Durand who was enjoying in a corner his vermouth and grenadine congratulated himself heartily that he was not in the photograph.

When he reached home his wife sprang to hug him, then waved under his nose the revealing picture: for already prints were everywhere in the city.

"Oh, my dear," she said. "What luck that you are not in this! And to whom do you owe your good luck? To whom? Without the crib and the infant Jesus, Lily would never have rummaged in the closet; she wouldn't have found your decorations and you would

have gone to the Lodge with your comrades. If people don't stick up their noses at you now, you owe it to the infant Jesus. Just deny that, if you can!"

"Well, that's stretching it a little too far," replied M. Durand, pleased nevertheless.

THE OPINIONS OF LIETTE

MY little goddaughter Liette was ten years old. She was a thoughtful child. I had given her for her birthday a beautiful copy of fairy tales. When I next saw her I said, "Did you read my book?"

"Yes, godfather."

"Did you find it amusing?"

"Surely," said Liette with a puckered mouth. "But there is a great deal of choice."

"What do you mean by that, Liette?"

"Well, there are certainly some stories quite good, some with good endings—"

"You mean?"

"That is to say, some in which the wicked are punished, and the good rewarded. For instance: 'Sleeping Beauty' and 'Cinderella' end very well. But the others—"

"Explain what you mean, Liette."

"Look, godfather; do you believe the end of 'Little Red Riding Hood'? Here's a little girl eaten by the wolf. But why? Because she was polite to him and because she liked to gather hazel-nuts! And the grandmother, also eaten by the wolf, what evil did she do, the grandmother?

"Just the same with the wife of the ogre in 'Hop o' My Thumb.' She was quite good, the wife of the ogre. When she saw Hop o' My Thumb and his brothers, she began to cry, and she said to them, 'Oh,

my poor children, where did you come from?' She had them warm themselves beside a nice fire, and when her husband came home she hid them under the bed. She induced the ogre not to kill them until the next day, and she gave them supper. And what reward did she get for her big heart? The next morning she found her seven little girls stabbed and 'swimming in their own blood.' Was that just? I know perfectly well that the little ogresses were not pretty and that they promised to be very evil. But after all, she loved them like that, since she was their mother."

Liette delivered these last words with great expression—as in a theater.

"Is that all, Liette?"

"Oh," she exclaimed, raising her head and shaking her curls, "I should never finish if I told you all."

"We have time, Liette."

"Well, then," she went on after a moment of reflection, "so many are punished who never did anything at all; but there are others who are punished, not unjustly, if you insist, but much more than they deserved."

"What do you want? That's life."

"What are you saying?"

"Nothing. Go on."

"For instance, what did she do, the wife of Bluebeard? She was curious, disobedient. But she had the right to go wherever she wanted since she was the mistress of the house. But wasn't she punished enough by the fright she felt in the closet of the underground room, and when she saw that the little key was stained with blood and that the blood would not wash away?

"No, that wasn't enough," continued Liette in a sarcastic tone. "It was necessary that her husband seize her by the hair with one hand while he raised his cutlass in the air with his other to cut off her head. Happily her two brothers arrived in time. But just think what she suffered—the poor creature! And all that for a little disobedience of nothing at all!

"And in 'Toads and Diamonds,' too! Even though Fanchon is stupid and proud, is it not punishment enough for her to see her younger sister drop pearls and diamonds from her mouth and then marry the King's son? I repeat to you, I don't like Fanchon. But to go to a corner of the forest to die and not be able even to cry without spitting out frogs and snakes—certainly that's too, too much."

"But at least, Liette, you approve of the success of the Marquis and his faithful Puss-in-Boots?"

"Oh! There too is something to be said. Children are told not to lie; they're slapped when they do lie; yet your fine Puss-in-Boots does nothing but lie from morning till night. And then, why eat up the ogre who received him politely in his castle? The ogre was fool enough to change himself into a mouse, because of his pride; but that's not a reason. And that fine booby of a Marquis who becomes so rich without ever working with a single one of his ten fingers, is that fair?

"So you see, godfather, your fairy tales are nice, but they give children false ideas."

. . . . . .

Some days after this conversation—in fact on Christmas day—Liette, having gathered her little friends,

Zette, Toche, Dine, Pote, Niquette, and Yoyo, told them stories, which was one of her great delights.

Six pairs of limpid eyes were fixed upon Liette, and six rose mouths drank in her words.

"At that time Jesus was born in a stable, between an ox and an ass. Mary and Joseph were beside Him and the shepherds and the wise men came to worship Him.

"At the same time, Little Red Riding Hood, who no longer remembered meeting the wolf, was amusing herself by gathering hazel-nuts, by running after butterflies, and by making bouquets of flowers."

"Flowers at Christmas?" asked Zette.

Liette disregarded this objection.

"She did not notice that night had fallen. The forest was dark. The basket she carried on her arm, in which she had a loaf and a little pot of butter, seemed very heavy to her. She had lost her way and began to cry. But in the distance she spied a little light. She walked toward it—and arrived at the stable where Jesus was lying in the manger.

"At first she was surprised; but as the little Jesus smiled at her, she kissed Him, and she offered her loaf, her little pot of butter, and her flowers to the Virgin. The Virgin thanked her and said, 'You have done well to come here, my child; otherwise you would have been devoured by the wolf. But the wolf has not even eaten your grandmother, for a man spied him just as he was trying to get in and chased him away with stones.'

"Then the Virgin commanded one of the shepherds to lead the little girl to her parents who were worried about her. And one of the wise men found her so gentle that he wanted to adopt her. 'Come, ask my

parents,' said Little Red Riding Hood. And the wise man went with her; he adopted Little Red Riding Hood and took her away to his court with her father, her mother, and her grandmother."

. . . . . .

"And that's not all," resumed Liette. "When Little Red Riding Hood left the stable, the wife of the ogre came in, all in tears.

"She told her griefs to the Virgin and how she had found her seven daughters done to death. The Virgin, after having spoken in a low voice to the infant Jesus, replied to her, 'Go back to your house, poor woman; there you will find your seven children alive in their bed; they will be prettier than before, and in place of their long noses and their pointed teeth, they will have tiny teeth and cute little pug noses. But warn your husband not to kill any more little children.' 'I shall not fail, Madame,' said the ogre's wife. 'Besides, my husband is sorry he killed his own daughters by mistake and I believe his grief has changed him for the better.' 'If that is so,' said one of the three wise men, 'I shall take him into my service, and he will be one of the Swiss guards in my palace.'

"The ogre's wife expressed her sincere thanks and went away happy.

"Then Madame Bluebeard entered the stable, her hair mussed, with a little key in her hand. She told her adventure to the Virgin, and how she feared the return of her husband. The Virgin took the little key stained with blood, touched the infant Jesus with it, and the blood vanished at once.

"And the Virgin returned the key to Madame Blue-

beard, who thanked her kindly. Madame Bluebeard went home, and her husband never knew that she had disobeyed him. He was very kind to her, but because he had been harsh to his first wives, he died a few days later from a hunting accident.

"And Fanchon, the haughty girl who had been sentenced to spit out frogs and snakes at every word, came in her turn to the stable of Bethlehem. She advanced to Jesus, kneeled, and trembling all over at what was sure to happen, she said, 'Jesus, pity me.' But instead of vipers and frogs, Christmas roses fell from her lips.

"As soon as Fanchon, weeping her thanks, had retired, a gentleman presented himself, richly clothed and wearing a hat with great feathers. 'Make way, lackeys, for the Marquis! Make way!' And approaching the manger, he doffed his hat and said to the infant Jesus, 'My Cousin, I present my respects to You.'

"'Monsieur the Marquis,' said the Virgin to him, 'go back to your home, if you please. First of all, you are not a marquis, for you are the son of a carpenter. You are not the friend of my Son, for you have not a humble heart, and you have acquired your huge fortune only by the ruses and deceits of your cat. Aren't you ashamed to owe all you are to him? Go home, my boy. While you were coming here, your fine castle has disappeared; and you'll find nothing but the place where it stood. But if you go to work and work hard I promise you in the name of my Son that you will soon earn your living and not be unhappy.'

"And the Marquis went away amid the laughter of the shepherds and the wise men.

"That's all."

Zette, Toche, Dine, Pote, Niquette, and Yoyo appeared delighted with these stories.

. . . . . .

I had listened from my corner, pretending to read my newspaper. When Liette had finished I spoke.

"You did that very well. You have just shown in your inventions, with the gentleness and grace of a French woman, the delicacy of a conscience slowly purified by the generations of excellent Aryans whose little heiress you are—"

"I don't understand what you are saying, godfather."

"That makes no difference, Liette. But you did not tell of the fairies in the Fairy Tales. They also came to worship the infant Jesus in the stable. And they were beautiful and gorgeously clad, one in gold, another in silver, a third in crimson silk, the fourth in sky blue velvet, and so on, and they sparkled with a thousand jewels, and it was a brave sight that you can more easily imagine than I can describe. The infant Jesus received their homage; then He changed the fairies into saints and He sent them out into the country-side and the forests. There they take care of the herbs and the flowers of which remedies are made and the springs that cure the sick. They protect travelers; they drive cattle away from poisonous plants; they teach the birds to sing.

"And it was one of them who first spoke to your great friend Joan of Arc under the fairy oak."

THE BEASTS OF THE FIELD

OLD SEPHORA lived in the village of Bethlehem.

She made her living from a herd of goats and a little orchard planted with fig trees.

As a young girl she had been servant for a priest so that she was more knowing in matters of religion than persons of her station usually are.

Returned to the village, married, several times a mother, she had lost her husband and her children. And then, though helping men according to her means, the greatest part of her sympathy she poured out on animals. She protected birds and mice; she gathered in abandoned dogs and distressed cats; and her little house was crowded with all these humble guests.

She loved animals, not only because they are innocent, because they give their hearts to those who love them, and because their trust is overwhelming, but because she was swayed by a sense of justice.

She did not understand why those who could not be wicked should suffer, nor how they could violate a rule of which they knew nothing.

She could explain better or worse the suffering of mankind. Taught by the priest, she did not believe that everything ended in the sleepy peace of *scheol*, nor that the Messiah when he should appear was merely to establish the earthly kingdom of Israel. The "Kingdom of God" would be the reign of justice

beyond the tomb. It was perfectly clear that in the unknown world all suffering would deserve expiation. Unmerited and purposeless suffering (like that of little children or certain unfortunates who had sinned only a little) would seem no more than a bad dream and would be rewarded by a happiness at least to an equal degree.

But what of the beasts that suffer? Those who slowly die of cruel diseases—as men do—and raise their pleading eyes to you? Dogs to whom affection is never shown, or those who love their masters and waste away from loneliness? Horses, whose long days are nothing but heaving efforts, and weariness of bleeding under blows, whose rest, even in the darkness of narrow stalls, is so mournful? Captive beasts devoured by homesickness behind the bars of cages? All those poor beasts whose life is a hopeless agony, deprived even of a voice to utter what they endure, a voice with which to curse? What end does their suffering serve? What reward can they expect?

Sephora was a very simple old woman; but because she was sincerely hungry for justice, she often turned over these questions in her mind; and the thought of unexplained grief obscured for her the beauty of the day and the exquisite colors of the hills of Judea.

. . . . . .

When her neighbors came to tell her, "The Messiah is born; an angel proclaimed Him to us last night; He is in a stable with His mother only a quarter of a league from here; and we have worshipped Him," old Sephora replied:

"We shall see."

For she had an idea.

That evening, after having cared for her goats, fed her other beasts, and patted all of them, she made her way toward the miraculous stable.

In the enchantment of the blue night, the plain, the rocks, the trees, and even the blades of grass seemed motionless with joy. One would have said that the whole earth slept deliciously. But old Sephora did not forget that even at that moment unjust nature was doing wrongs that no future could right; she could not put away from her thoughts the fact that at that very moment, throughout the vast world, sick persons who were not wicked were sweating with anguish in their burning beds; travelers were being killed along the roads; men were being tortured by other men; mothers were weeping over their little dead babies; and animals were suffering terribly without knowing why.

Before her she saw a light, gentle but yet so alive that it paled the light of the moon. This glow spread from the stable huddled in a fissure of the rocks and supported by pillars of stone.

Near the entrance some camels slept on their bent knees in the midst of a pile of chased and colored vases, baskets of fruit, thick carpets unrolled, and open caskets in which jewels sparkled dazzlingly.

"Now, what's all this?" asked the old woman.

"The Kings are here," a man replied.

"Kings?" said Sephora, frowning.

. . . . . .

She went into the stable, saw the infant Jesus in the manger between Mary and Joseph, the three Magi, shepherds, and laborers with their wives, their sons,

and their daughters, and in a corner an ass and an ox.

"Let us see," she said.

The three Kings advanced to the Child, and the shepherds politely stepped back before them. But the Child made a sign to the shepherds to draw near.

Old Sephora did not stir.

The Child placed his little hand first upon the heads of the wives and the daughters because they are better and suffer the more, then upon the heads of the men and the boys.

And Mary spoke to them.

"Be patient; He loves you and has come to suffer with you."

Then the white King believed his turn had come. But the Child with a gentle gesture called the black King, then the yellow King.

The black King, with hair curled close and shining with oil, and smiling with all his teeth, offered to the New-born necklaces of bones of fish, varicolored pebbles, dates, and cocoanuts.

Mary spoke to him.

"You are not bad, but you do not know. Try to picture what you would be if you were not King in your country. Eat no more men, and beat no more of your subjects."

The yellow King, with slanting eyes, offered pieces of gilt embroidered with dragons, Chinese vases on which rays of the moon seemed marked in the enamel, a sphere of ivory curiously marked to represent the heavens with the planets and all the animals of creation, and sacks of tea gathered from selected bushes in the best season.

And Mary spoke to him.

"No longer hide yourself from your people. Believe no longer that all wisdom belongs to you and your race. And take care of those who have only mouldy rice to eat."

The white King in military uniform offered the Child delicate silver-ware, chiselled and inlaid weapons, statuettes carved in the form of beautiful women, and purple cases containing the writings of a sage named Plato.

And Mary spoke to him.

"Make no more unjust wars. Beware of pleasures that harden the heart. Proclaim equitable laws, and know that it is the concern of you and of all others that no one in your kingdom shall be badly treated."

And after the shepherds and the laborers, the Child blessed the Kings, in the order in which He had summoned them.

. . . . . .

Old Sephora was thinking.

"This order is sensible. The Child began with those who need His coming most. He makes it plain that He is careful to deal with justice, that He will reestablish its reign in both this world and the other. His mother, also, talked well. Nevertheless, He doesn't think of everything. What will He do for the animals?"

But Mary understood her thoughts. She turned to her Son and the Child turned toward the ass and the ox.

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The donkey, skinny and mangy, the ox, fat enough but sad, drew near to the manger and sniffed at Jesus.

The Child placed one hand on the nose of the ox while with His other hand He gently pressed one of the ears of the ass.

And the ox seemed to smile; and from the eyes of the ass dropped two tears to lose themselves in his thick hair.

At the same time one of the camels outside quietly entered the stable and stretched his trusting head towards the Child.

. . . . . .

Old Sephora understood what all this meant:—there is also a paradise for suffering animals.

And then in her turn she stepped toward the Child.

THE SCHOOL OF THE KINGS

AFTER the shepherds had withdrawn the three Kings remained alone with the Child, Mary, and Joseph.

They were Gaspard, whose kingdom was in Africa; Melchior, whose kingdom was in Europe; and Balthazar, whose kingdom was in a land no one knows.

Mary spoke to them.

"You must be hungry. Will you eat with us?"

The Kings accepted the invitation. Mary served them bread, cheese, and figs; Balthazar had wine brought from his stores; and all ate with a good appetite.

Toward the close of the meal, Joseph the carpenter, slightly warmed by the wine, spoke to the three Kings.

"What's happened here is wonderful, isn't it? This little One is the Messiah foretold by the Prophets; then He is more powerful than all kings; yet you see He was born in a stable; and He sleeps in a manger on the straw. All three of you are kings, yet you have just eaten at the same table with us and eaten milk, food, bread, and fruit the shepherds brought to us; it's poor people who have fed you."

The Kings softened; they felt their hearts melt. The Child, having sucked, was sleeping. The ox chewed; the ass came to nibble bread crumbs from the hand of King Melchior. Mary smiled. It was cozy and warm in the stable.

The carpenter began again, his cheeks glowing and his eyes shining.

"All men are brothers; all men are equal, all being sons of God, rich or poor, kings or workmen. This is what this Child has come to make plain. And soon there will be no more poor or rich, slaves or tyrants. Jesus will bring back the kingdom of justice, the city where we shall all be happy, since we shall all love one another."

Mary timidly interrupted.

"That's all very fine, and we should work for it. But shall we ever see it? I believe, my dear, that the kingdom of Jesus is not of this world."

But without heeding her the carpenter went on prophesying the coming of brotherliness and love.

King Balthazar listened attentively; King Melchior shed a few tears; and Gaspard, the black King, burst into sobs.

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When the black King had reached his land, he assembled his people before his hut, weeping while he spoke to them.

"I bring you great news. We are all brothers; we are all equal; I am no longer King; you are free. My brothers, let us love one another!"

For some time the negroes could not understand. But when they thought they understood they sacked the dwelling of the King and the houses of the principal chiefs, drank all their stores of strong liquors and took possession of their women.

And King Gaspard, still weeping with tenderness, spoke.

"Be happy, poor children!"

But there were bloody combats among the pillagers; then as no one any longer cultivated the fields, there was famine.

Then an energetic negro, named Glegle, gathered the strongest negroes around him, and they chose him King.

Glegle cut off the heads of the former chiefs, threw Gaspard into a dungeon, collected provisions by fortunate raids on neighboring tribes, and reestablished order in the land of the blacks.

But a party of malcontents was formed. They released Gaspard and begged him to lead them.

The good King had done a deal of reflecting in his cell. He marched against Glegle, fought him, decapitated him, ate him, slaughtered all his partisans even unto the last one, and in his turn reestablished order, this time for several years.

And he had a bitter memory of his journey to Bethlehem.

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Returned to his estates, King Melchior reasoned with himself.

"If all men are equal, by what right am I sovereign? At least I should be only by the consent of all my subjects. Or rather, they should be governed only by themselves, or by representatives chosen by them."

He, therefore, asked his subjects to elect an Assembly.

Most of them had never dreamed of such a thing. They had no desires beyond eating as much as possible and paying as few taxes as possible. Only a small part

of the people chose the representatives; and they chose those who lied the most glibly and made the greatest promises; so that the Assembly was composed of turbulent, visionary, and greedy members.

These men set about talking interminably of liberty, fraternity, justice, humanity, progress, and civilization. And they concerned themselves with the happiness of the people.

They suppressed all the ancient associations, civil and religious, in which people had found a support and a defense. They sentenced to prison or exile or death all whom they suspected of attachment to the ancient order. And the entire country was a prey to these representatives of the wicked or their associates; and private injustice was more common, the suffering greater, the tyranny more oppressive than ever before.

And as the candid Melchior began to express his doubts on the value of their work, they declared him deposed and cut off his head.

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Riding towards his capital, King Balthazar considered.

"If a god has come to suffer and die for men that clearly proves their wickedness, which I already know. They do not love one another; they are unequal in strength and intellect; many are ignorant and stupid. I shall maintain my authority, not only because it pleases me, but in the best interests of my subjects. And I shall strive to make my land powerful, that they may profit by it and glory in it. If public order and prosperity do not prevent all injustice and all suffering, it will certainly lessen them.

"But on the other hand I bring back a new sentiment from my journey, a more compassionate heart. This idea, that we are all saved by the same god and in consequence are in some manner equal, will diminish my pride and will induce me to govern with mildness —at least as much as the interests of all will permit. And I shall spread among my subjects that other idea that perfect justice will prevail in a later life and that we should expect it there. I shall have this doctrine taught, certainly not to deceive them and not to relieve me from doing fairly by them, but to assist them to bear inevitable misfortunes."

Thus Balthazar was a practical despot—conscientious, cordial, and skilful. He gave his subjects not liberty—which is merely a word—but countless liberties.

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One day (it was about thirty-five years after his journey to Bethlehem) his chief of police reported to him that some foreign vagabonds were haranguing the people at the street corners, promising them the Kingdom of God tomorrow.

He recognized in them the disciples of Jesus—and he had them arrested at once to give him time to think the situation over.

In the meantime, he treated them honorably. He had several interviews with them. He forced them to admit that they could not count upon the Kingdom of God for at least several thousand years. He gave them wise advice on the organization of a new religion, and made them promise to use prudence in changing the Gospel by the Church.

And he was converted himself to the faith of Christ, when he was convinced that the priests of the ancient religion of the land would speedily follow his example.

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He died full of years. His will contained these words: "On the day when it shall be fully proved that all men are good and that all men are equal in virtue and intelligence, I pray that one of my successors who shall be reigning at that time shall relinquish his power and establish in this land universal suffrage and representative government."

THE JOURNEY OF LITTLE HOZÆL

ALONG the quays of Capernaum, Jesus, surrounded by His apostles—Peter, Andrew, James, John, Matthew—preached the glad news.

Fishermen, carriers, workmen, sellers of oranges, and sellers of fish pressed to hear Him. And when He had spoken, some moved away shaking their heads; others questioned His followers about His family, His country, and His mode of life.

From time to time, the children playing on the shore, drew near with curiosity, slipping among the tall persons, and pressed themselves against the robe of the Prophet, attracted by the gentleness of His manners and the harmony of His voice.

Most of them had on their little dirty bodies nothing but a strip of gray wool and on their heads nothing but skull caps of faded red. But one of them was cleaner and better dressed. This was Hozæl, a youngster of ten years, son of a rich merchant named Joed, who professed pharisaism.

The child, carelessly reared by an indolent mother, often escaped from home to roam the city with street waifs; and it seemed strange that so correct a father should have a son with a spirit so independent and so far from particular in his choice of companions.

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Motionless among the noisy troop of brats, Hozæl gazed admiringly at Jesus.

Peter tried to push the children away, believing that they disturbed his Master. They scattered beneath his thumps on their heads. But Hozæl remained and Jesus spoke.

"Peter does wrong. Suffer little children to come unto Me."

"You hear that?" said Hozæl to the crabbed apostle.

"For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," Jesus added.

And Hozæl felt proud, though he did not understand completely. He took hold of a fold of the Prophet's robe and remained close to Him.

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Toward evening Jesus and His apostles entered into a fishing boat and sailed away. They wished to reach before dark a sheltered inlet where they knew that they could sleep well protected under the spreading sycamores.

During the sail Peter discovered Hozæl asleep behind a pile of ropes. He seized him by the ear.

"You again! How did you get here?"

"I slipped into the boat behind the Rabbi, for I love Him and will never leave Him."

Jesus had heard these words and now drew near.

"Hozæl shall be the smallest of My apostles."

Peter grumbled, then softened. He asked the child who his parents were. Hozæl told their names, and said that they dwelt in Capernaum. But it was too late to take the boy back.

Happily next morning the apostles met on the shore

a carrier who was going to the city. They directed him to reassure the parents of Hozæl and to say that the child would be brought back as soon as the Rabbi had finished the little preaching journey he was undertaking around the lake.

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Hozæl spent two delightful weeks with his new friends. At times they sailed on the lake, at times they walked along its shore from village to village by roads bordered with fig and lemon trees.

They took naps near springs. The air was so light and pure that merely to breathe it was a delight. They met shepherds with their flocks, women bearing crocks, carriages with merchants, sometimes the litter of a Roman matron, wife of some high official. Sometimes they slept in the houses of friends, sometimes in an inn, often under the stars. Jesus preached in open spaces and healed the sick. The crowd followed Him with acclamations. Hozæl loved this vagrant life—carefree and novel.

He knew Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Salome, mother of James and John. The two women, finding him gentle and attractive, looked after him. They took care of his garments, spoiled him, and caressed him continually.

At the wedding in Cana, he enjoyed himself immensely. The inner court of the house was decorated with garlands of flowers. There were tables laden with syrups, cakes, and fruits, from which the guests ate what they chose. Musicians sang at the tops of their voices to the accompaniment of the lutes. Young

girls danced, hardly moving their feet as they waved their veils. They drank the excellent wine that Jesus had made from water. That night Hozæl was a little bit excited and took a long time to go to sleep on Mary's lap.

But there was not such a grand time every day. When the company had nothing to eat, Peter and Andrew would go down to the lake and row out to cast a line. Hozæl enjoyed piling the green and silver fish in the baskets and often asked about them.

"Do they suffer any?"

"No, no! Stupid!" Peter would exclaim.

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One day when the company had halted in a little village, Hozæl, wandering about the ways, passed before a house from which he heard groans and funeral chants. He went in to see what was going on.

A young girl lay stretched upon a bed, dead. The room was crowded with veiled mourners and flute players. Beside the bed a captain in resplendent military uniform wept; and his sobs made the pliable plates of his breastplate rustle.

Hozæl realized that this was the father. He went to him with assurance.

"I know a Prophet Who can give you back your daughter."

The distress of the man was so great that he seized the hope brought by this child. Hozæl led him to Jesus. Jesus came, took the young girl by the hand, and she rose. And Hozæl thought all this quite natural.

When the girl, returned to life, had thanked Jesus, her father spoke.

"Thank also this child, for he led me to the Lord."

The girl kissed the child. And the part that Hozæl had played in the miracle won for him a certain consideration among the companions of Jesus.

And Peter, who liked him better and better, made for him from boards, sticks, ends of cord, and pieces of cloth, a little boat exactly like the large ones. And it sailed perfectly on the water.

. . . . . .

Now, whenever Jesus spoke to the throngs, Hozæl remained motionless, as if in ecstasy.

"Master," said Peter, "one would say he understands You, in spite of his lack of years."

One day Jesus replied to this.

"Why not? There are large flowers and little flowers; but both receive the morning dew, and each receives what it needs."

. . . . . .

When Jesus and His companions had finished their journey, Peter took Hozæl to the house of his father Joed. The child was sharply scolded. But as he was not exactly clear in what he was guilty, he was finally left to himself.

Next day again his father tried to reach him through his pride.

"Aren't you ashamed to run about the country with vagabonds and persons of no standing?"

Hozæl was not at all ashamed.

"They are very good men, with whom I was never bored, and who know the Kingdom of God."

"The Kingdom of God? And what's that?"

"That," said the boy, "is when it's beautiful and everybody is good."

. . . . . .

Some days later the father gave him as teacher a scribe of the synagogue. But Hozæl did not care for work, so he opposed all exhortation merely with idleness, seemingly certain of his rights.

"If you do not work," his father told him, "you will die of hunger after I'm gone. For tell me who will provide for you? Who will clothe you? You must work to live."

"The birds," replied Hozæl, "do not sow; neither do they reap; nor do they gather into bins; but our heavenly Father feeds them. The lilies of the field do not spin; yet Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of them."

"You're not," said Joed, "a lily or a bird, but a bad little boy."

. . . . . .

Another day, when Hozæl was alone in the house, he let some beggars into the court, went to his mother's room, took up a handful of jewels, and distributed them.

His mother surprised him in the midst of this and shrieked at him.

"Don't you know, Mother," he said gravely, "that the Master commands us to give all that we have to the poor?"

The beggars seemed to approve this direction. There was a great deal of trouble in making them give up

the jewels. Some of them were missing when the final count was made.

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At another time Joed saw Hozæl playing with some comrades in the garden. He stopped to watch them.

Two of the children were carrying a third in their arms. They put him down before Hozæl.

"He is a paralytic," they said.

Hozæl passed his hands over his face, then spoke gravely.

"Rise, in the name of our Father Who is in Heaven."

And the little paralytic began to caper about.

"What are you doing there?" asked Joed.

"We're playing miracles," explained Hozæl.

"I'd rather you'd play at building or puss in a corner."

. . . . . .

Next day Hozæl said he was bored and that he would die if they did not let him go back to the Rabbi.

"Then you wish to leave us, you little scamp?" asked Joed.

"The Rabbi teaches," the child replied, "that one must leave father and mother to follow Him."

"Abominable!" exclaimed the father.

"Don't you love us?" sobbed the mother.

"I do love you," the child said, his heart overflowing, "but I love the Rabbi more."

This time little Hozæl was thrashed, a proceeding which did not increase his filial piety.

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A few days later, while passing through the town with his mother, they met a woman overloaded with

jewels, with her face uncovered and painted. Hozæl's mother turned away with a look of distaste.

"Why do you turn away?" asked her boy. "Because she is a woman of bad life?"

"What are you saying? And how do you know?"

"Well, once a woman like that came into the room when we were at supper, and Peter said in a low voice that she was a woman of bad life. But she poured perfumes over the feet of the Rabbi, and she wept while she wiped them with her hair. I think such women are very good."

"My dear child, you have been taught some fine things!" said the distracted mother.

. . . . . .

Another day, Hozæl suddenly spoke to his father.

"Father, you are a pharisee?"

"Yes, my boy."

"But what is a pharisee?"

"A man who observes the law strictly."

"Not at all. But I—I know what a pharisee is."

"What is it then, since you're so wise?"

"I shall tell you, Father. A pharisee is a whited sepulchre."

. . . . . .

Joed thought, "My little son has become mad. This Jesus has completely poisoned his mind. I shall have an explanation from this man."

He inquired and learned that Jesus was at Jerusalem.

He went there and had, in truth, an explanation from Him that must have been very serious, for he came home converted.

Then he converted his wife and gently straightened

out the ingenious applications that Hozæl made of the teachings of the Savior.

And Joed, and his wife, and the little Hozæl were later great saints, although they were not mentioned in *The Golden Legend.*

GOOD WOMAN, THOUGH THIEF

NOW Jesus was going toward Capernaum with Peter, Andrew, James, John, Thomas, and Judas. For they were not yet twelve.

To avoid the great heat they had set out shortly before sunset and intended to travel through a part of the night.

Their resources were almost exhausted. Only six silver pieces remained in the leather bag carried by Judas under his cloak. But at Capernaum, Peter, Andrew, James, and John would work for several months at their trade as fishermen and Thomas as cobbler; and Judas for the time would go into the counting house of a publican to write. All would lodge with Salome, mother of James and John, whose house was large. Then when they had accumulated some money, they would travel again, and follow once more the preaching of Jesus through Galilee.

The way wound among the olive trees whose twisted trunks were black against the red sky of the setting sun.

Judas spoke to his companions.

"I joined you because I love justice. Your fishing will bring you little. You would gain more if you would join with the other fishermen of the lake to force your prices on the dealers in fish, who are unjust and grasping."

"That's true," said John, "but you speak as if this world were more than a transitory dwelling-place."

"Because a thing is transitory is no reason for disregarding it," answered Judas.

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The moon, rising, cast a blue powder among the branches of the olives.

Soon the way entered a sort of defile between two rocky hills.

Five men sprang from the bushes. Their faces were cruel; they were armed with knives and daggers; and one of them—the leader—was tall and wore a plume in his turban.

They barred the way of the travelers and with threats ordered them to stop.

Peter raised his staff to defend himself, but Jesus addressed him.

"Do not resist."

"In fact," murmured Thomas, "the robbers will be robbed."

The robbers set about searching the clothes of Jesus, Peter, James, John, Andrew, and Thomas, but found nothing.

But as Judas had tried to flee the chief of the band seized him, found the purse, saw the six coins.

"This is not much," he remarked, "but it's something, as these hard times go."

"You may go on your way," he added. "I wish you no more bad luck."

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Jesus and His apostles then went on their way, and Jesus talked with them of the Kingdom of God.

But Judas could not stop sighing. He spoke to Jesus.

"Master, it's not that I love the money, but that I love justice. That's why I wish wealth were equally distributed among all men. I dream of a society of brothers who will labor together and practice virtue, whose manager and treasurer I shall be to help them live in peace."

These remarks made Thomas smile, and Jesus answered with the parable of the birds of the air and the lilies of the field who do not spin.

And as the moon had just disappeared they did not see a woman following them.

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They halted to rest in a shelter formed by the rocks. John spoke gaily.

"Let us sleep in peace, like the lilies of the field. Since we now possess nothing, we need not fear robbers."

When at dawn they awoke, they saw a woman standing near, gazing at them. She held a bag in her hand. This woman, still young and painted, was clad in faded finery and wore bracelets on her wrists and ankles.

She approached Jesus and handed Him the purse.

"Behold, Lord, what was taken from You."

Jesus handed the purse to Judas, who opened it to see what was within.

"Yesterday," said Jesus, "the purse contained six coins. Why are there nine today?"

"True," remarked Judas.

The woman reddened but did not dare reply. Thomas spoke to her courteously.

"Woman, we are beholden to you. But how did our money fall into your hands? And why do you restore it to us? And even with usury?"

"I am," the woman went on, "the friend of Dysmas, the robber chieftain. I prepare all their food and I mend all their clothes; but I belong only to Dysmas. Yesterday I was not far away when they searched you, for I gave them the signal of your coming. But when I saw you closer, you seemed different from other men; and because of that I've followed you while Dysmas and his band go back to the old ruined building where we live. I heard your Master's words. I saw that you are poor; I knew that you are good. Then I went back quickly to my friend's house. I took the bag while he was sleeping, and brought it to you, after adding three pieces. Don't thank me; Dysmas will soon make it up from some rich merchant."

"But," asked Peter, "since you are so honest with us, how can you live with a robber on his thefts and perhaps his murders?"

"Oh! Murders—only seldom," the woman answered. "My friend doesn't approve of that, and when he kills, it's only not to be killed himself."

"But even that is very wicked," said James, "and you seem not to suspect it. Has no one even taught you the law?"

"The law?" puzzled the woman. "What's that—the law? And who could have taught it to me? I was born far from here, in the city of Alexandria. My mother was one of those women they call *hetaira* over there. As a little girl I danced in taverns. Then I followed my mother's profession. But as I was not

earning much a Greek merchant took me to Cæsarea, where there was a Roman garrison. There I met Dysmas; I loved him and followed him."

"But," expostulated James, "it is impossible that you should go on living with him in sin."

"What's that—sin?" asked the woman.

"Stay with us," invited Andrew. "Our Master will teach you the word of God."

"Stay with us," seconded Thomas. "We shall respect you as if you were our sister. If you go back to your companion, no doubt he will ill-treat you."

"And besides," said Judas to Thomas, "since she knows how to dance, she will dance in the towns where we go. I'll announce the show, and we'll ask from every spectator a little copper coin."

"Oh. No!" objected John. "She must not be a dancer any more and awaken in men desires which should not be tolerated. If you wish, woman, we shall take you to the house of my mother, Salome. You shall dwell with her. She will teach you to mend nets. And several times every year, you shall see our Master."

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The woman hesitated; but while she listened to the others she gazed only at Jesus.

Finally she spoke.

"If I go back to Dysmas, he will beat me, that's true, but not too much. Besides, he needs me; he will be unhappy if I'm not with him; and perhaps he'll grow less wicked. And then, I love him. I loved him at first because I thought him handsome; but, moreover, he was the first before you who has

been good to me. And I love him too because his profession is not always so agreeable as one might believe, and because we have often suffered together. I shall repeat to him the things that I've heard this night from the lips of your Master while I was following you; for I've not forgotten them. This is my thought; but, for all that, I shall do whatever your Master bids me."

"Woman," said Jesus, "go back to your companion."

SARAI

SARAI, of Capernaum, was the daughter of Jonas, owner of a ship, and sister of Simon and Andrew.

Jonas had for friend and neighbor the fisherman Zebedee, husband of Salome and father of James and John.

Sarai was beautiful and sensible. As a child, she had played on the shore of the lake with John, who was gentle and of an agreeable countenance. Older, she came each day to the good Salome's house and worked with her in mending nets and darning her brother's clothes.

When she was seventeen years old she knew that she loved John, son of Zebedee and Salome; and as he treated her genially she believed that he loved her and that soon he would ask for her in marriage.

It was then that they began to tell in the district of a young prophet who was traveling about Galilee announcing the Kingdom of God.

"Now," says the Gospel, "as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

"And Jesus said unto them, 'Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men.'

"And straightway they forsook their nets and followed Him.

"And when He had gone a little farther hence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother who also were in the ship mending their nets.

"And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him."

Zebedee, returning home that night, told all these things to his wife. He added that when Jesus spoke no one could resist Him. Sarai was present; she did not dare to say anything, for John was not engaged to her; but when she was alone, she wept.

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Two weeks later John and his companions came home. They brought Jesus with them.

Jesus spake; and Zebedee and Salome believed in Him. And all were seized with an inexpressible emotion. But Sarai was not at all touched, for she thought that this Prophet had taken away the man she loved.

John continued to treat her amicably; but he did not notice her pallor and the sadness in her eyes.

To feast Jesus, there was a meal at the house of Zebedee to which the neighbors were invited.

Sarai helped Salome to serve the guests. She saw that John was the beloved friend of the Prophet, and realized that doubtless he would never be hers. She trembled so violently that she dropped a dish that broke and scattered about the floor. Jesus interceded to save her from being scolded. But she did not have courage enough to thank Him.

That same day Jesus entered the lean-to where she was washing the dishes. He spoke to her.

"My child, why are you troubled in your heart?"

But she fled without answering or even looking at Him.

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John spent some days at Capernaum working at his trade as fisherman to make some money for another journey.

Sarai came at intervals to sew with Salome. She was so sad that the old woman at last noticed it, and spoke to her.

"How can you be sad when you know the glad tidings and believe in the coming of the Kingdom of God?"

The young girl thought, "My Kingdom of God was when John loved me; and my glad tidings would be a loving word from his lips."

When John left to rejoin Jesus she could not hide her distress. She ran after John, and caught up with him at the harbor.

"John," she called, "I beg you—don't go away!"

She clung to his garments; but he, red with anger and shame, threw her upon the paving. People who happened to see mocked her; children followed her with taunts; and she made her way to her father's house weeping.

From then on she dared not go to the home of her neighbor Salome. She stayed at home with her infirm father. Her brothers, when they were at home, considered her with stern pity. And sometimes they spoke to one another.

"Without doubt she is possessed by an evil spirit; we shall ask the Master to deliver her."

They spoke to Him.

"Let her alone," He told them. "At present the spirit that possesses her is more powerful than I am."

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One day Jesus came to Capernaum for a short rest. He was accompanied this time by devout Galilean women—Joan, Susanna, Mary Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. Sarai knew vaguely what Mary Magdalene had been, and she thought, "Perhaps she will know a remedy for my malady."

She made plans to meet her in a secluded spot, and told her the trouble.

"You who have loved, aid me!"

"Have I loved?" began Mary Magdalene. "I no longer know. But all my desires, when I satisfied them, turned to bitterness, and left only ashes in my mouth."

"At least," urged Sarai, "you did satisfy them. I wish to know this bitterness and taste these ashes."

"Poor child!" said Mary. "I have found the only love that does not disappoint. Love, as I do, the Son of the Father, He Who has the words of eternal life."

"I hate Him," Sarai broke out, "it is because of Him I suffer; and because of that I do not believe in His words."

She consulted an old Egyptian woman; she swallowed potions; she recited magic charms; but nothing could calm her malady; and day and night the image of John tortured her with a desire that dried her flesh and poisoned her blood.

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When the season of the Passover came she wished to go to Jerusalem with her parents, only two days' journey distant. Her mother approved this pious desire and hoped it would cure her daughter; but Sarai wanted only to be nearer John.

In the inn where they stayed they learned of the arrest and sentence of Jesus.

John and Mary, mother of Jesus, and Joan, and Susanna, and Mary Cleophas, and Veronica, and Mary Magdalene followed the condemned as close as the company of Roman soldiers would permit. Sarai joined the women of Galilee. The grief of John was hateful to her sight; but she told herself that once the Master was dead, John would return to his love of her.

The first nail was driven through the hand of the condemned and pierced the veins; the blood spurted forth and the whole body rose and writhed. But as Jesus did not cry out, Sarai felt no pity.

The cross was raised; the condemned hung by the four wounds. The sharp cries of the women rose uninterrupted, piercing the noise of the crowd at the celebration. Sarai, motionless, looked on as though the events were unreal; it seemed to her that she was dying, and that these cries were the laments of her own heart for her.

Then, when Jesus spoke; when He said to John and Mary: "Woman, behold thy son!—Behold thy Mother!" she knew that everything was ended for her; and stupefied she saw in spite of herself the black drops that fell one by one upon the feet of Jesus, and then the dots marked on the dice that the crouching soldiers cast in turns.

But when the Crucified, in a moment of agony, cried, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" she felt both a horrible relief and the beginnings of enough compassion to say to herself: "He also died despairingly."

But at the same instant, as the lamentations of the women doubled and Mary, mother of Jesus, slipped fainting from the arms of her friends, Sarai had for the first time this thought: "Perhaps there are other griefs greater than mine."

However, the Crucified, recovered from His weakness, with a supreme effort raised His hanging head. He saw the executioners casting dice for His threadbare tunic; farther away, on the side of the hill, He saw the joyous, blinded, and evil mob, and He prayed: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Then Sarai was vanquished. The revelation of a different kind of love smote her like a flash of lightning and struck her to the earth. So keen a grief or perhaps so keen a love overwhelmed her that it pierced her heart. But it was not toward John, but toward Jesus that she breathed her last sighs.

A CRITIC

THE shepherds had gone away and the Magi had not yet arrived. Mary was sleeping, lying in the manger holding in her arms the infant Jesus well covered with straw for warmth. Joseph, seated on a plowshare was keeping watch. Day began to dawn and a pale light squeezed through the cracks in the badly joined door.

A man opened the door, entered, and spoke to Joseph.

"What are you doing here?"

Joseph shuddered. The man went on.

"I am Mucius Nasica, owner of this sheep stable."

Joseph rose politely and pointing to the sleeping Mary and Child, he explained that finding himself with no shelter at night with his young wife near her time, he had not believed he was doing anything wrong in taking refuge in a stable that was not locked but seemed deserted.

"That's all very well," said Mucius, "but you should at least have asked my permission."

"Why? How could I have done that?"

"That, my friend, is your affair. Now, since you are here, stay as long as you need to."

"You will have no reason to regret your charity," said Joseph. "For this baby is the Messiah expected by the Jews."

"Oh," retorted Mucius, "that's all the same to me; I'm a Roman citizen."

As he went out: "I repeat that you should have spoken to me."

. . . . . .

Mucius was the son of a centurion who had come to Palestine in the train of the Roman procurator, who having retired had bought a farm on the road to Bethlehem. Active and ingenious, Mucius had added to the farm an inn for carters and a shop where he sold goods, spices, and household utensils. He had married an alert and pleasant Greek woman who helped him in all his varied activities. He often went either to sell his crops in the town of Judea or to buy merchandise. And he was a man careful and respectful of laws and customs.

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Twelve years after the birth of Jesus, Mucius was at Jerusalem at Passover. He met in a street the man and woman he had housed, even in spite of himself, in his stable at Bethlehem, and he easily recognized them.

Joseph was much disturbed and Mary was weeping. Mucius, having greeted them, asked them the cause of their worry and anxiety.

"We have," began Joseph, "lost our Son. At first we thought He had set out with His traveling companions; we made a day's journey and sought Him among our friends and acquaintances. But we did not find Him, so we came back to Jerusalem."

"Here's a wandering child!" remarked Mucius. He offered to help them find Jesus. At last they discovered Jesus in the Temple, where the Child was seated

in the midst of the doctors and amazed the longbeards leaning toward Him by the skill with which He expounded the Scriptures.

"Here He is!" said Mucius. "A youngster not too modest."

Mary, overcome with joy, all her anguish forgotten, spoke to Jesus.

"You have sorely distressed us, my Son. For three days your father and I have sought You."

The Child, not at all abashed, answered:

"Why should you seek Me? Know you not that I should be about My father's business?"

Mary answered not a word but turned aside to hide the tears that welled up in her eyes. But Mucius spoke out loud:

"Well, this youngster is unusual and sure of Himself!"

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Eighteen years later, as Mucius was landing in one of the ports of Galilee, he saw on the shore a thin young man, sandy, in a white tunic of coarse wool, followed by a rabble of poorly clad people of whom He seemed to be the leader. The Roman made inquiry. He learned that this young man was the Son of Mary and Joseph, that they talked a great deal of Him throughout the country, that He preached a new religion and predicted the Kingdom of God.

"The Kingdom of God? Now, what may that be?" thought Mucius.

At that instant a man drew near to Jesus and told Him that His mother and His brothers were asking for Him.

"Who are My mother and My brothers?" asked the young prophet.

"I am right," said Mucius. "This is the man. I'd know Him by that kind of answer alone."

Two fishermen, in a boat fastened to the quay, were mending their nets. Jesus advanced to them.

"James and John, sons of Zebedee, follow Me."

And James and John followed Him. An old man, their father, remained alone in the boat.

"Apparently, this old man," said Mucius to himself, "is not rich, and he cannot labor. Who will feed him? And what will become of him without his sons?"

Now Jesus, accompanied by James and John, having gone some distance along the shore, met a young man who seemed weighted down with great grief.

"Follow me," He said to him.

"Master," replied the young man, "my father is dead. Let me first go to bury him."

"Let the dead," commanded Jesus, "bury the dead; and you go to preach the Kingdom of God."

"I should have believed," thought Mucius, "that to bury one's father was an important duty for a son."

But, still bending his ear, he heard Jesus speak again.

"Because of Me, brother will deliver brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise against their parents and put them to death."

"What madness!" murmured Mucius. "These men are mad. But the power of this Jesus is strange!"

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Some time later, Mucius was invited to the wedding feast of one of his customers in the little village of

Cana in Galilee. Jesus and His mother were among the guests, and Mucius was placed beside Mary.

When the wine gave out, she spoke to her Son.

"There's no more wine."

But He: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."

Mary lowered her eyes, filled with tears.

"Is that the way," growled Mucius, "for a son to speak to his mother?"

But at once Jesus had six large jars filled with water, and when they poured from them, the water had been changed into excellent wine.

"The trick is well done!" Mucius politely remarked to Mary. "My father (he often told me about it) saw it done at Rome by Syrian magicians."

They drank so much, and so much more, of this excellent wine, that heads grew fuddled, there were quarrels, blows struck, and toward dawn, piles of drinkers under the tables, swollen like wine-skins.

"Singular behavior for a prophet!" observed Mucius. "To encourage drunkenness!"

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At another time Mucius was taking a cart laden with wicker cages to Jerusalem. They were bustling with pigeons that he was going to sell to the petty dealers about the Temple. Crossing the cultivated plain near the city, he saw Jesus and His disciples enter a field of grain, gather the kernels by handfuls, rub them between their palms, and eat them.

A Jew came along; Mucius spoke to him.

"Truly, these vagrants don't mind anything."

"A sacrilege!" exclaimed the Jew. "On the Sabbath!"

"But," retorted Mucius, "whether it be the Sabbath or any other day, the fault is the same, I suppose."

"I see," said the other, "that you are a foreigner. What I reproach them with is breaking the fast, not gathering the grain. For it is written in the law of Moses, 'If you enter the fields of another, you may pluck the grain with your hand.'"

"Grain is grain," retorted Mucius. "Your Moses was no doubt not an owner of crops."

. . . . . .

Next day as he carried his cages into the portico of the Temple, he saw among overturned tables, prostrate stools, and fleeing merchants, Jesus wielding a lash, and crying out:

"My house is a house of prayer and ye have made it a den of thieves!"

And the terrified pigeons beat against the columns in slow echoing flight.

. . . . . .

Some hours later, in one of the open spaces of the town, he spied Jesus conversing with several Pharisees. They were asking Him questions, hoping to embarrass Him.

"Should we render tribute to Cæsar, or not?"

"Show Me a coin," said Jesus.

"Behold it, Master."

"Whose are this image and this inscription?"

"Cæsar's."

"Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

"Fine!" exclaimed Mucius, astonished. "That's the first sensible thing I've heard Him say."

Then he reflected.

"No, I'm mistaken. For from this it would follow that everything that bears the image of the Emperor belongs really to the Emperor; and that's not to be accepted. He is mocking us. This man, at heart, is a revolutionist of the most dangerous kind; but He is prudent and doesn't lack courage."

. . . . . .

Now, in leaving Jerusalem, Mucius passed through the country of the Gadarines, to visit a small holding of his wife's, for her father had just died. Her inheritance consisted of a few fields and a herd of swine. But the swineherd and others of the countryside told him that a few days before this, all the pigs had cast themselves into the sea, for Jesus had sent into their bodies the evil spirits that possessed a beggar of the neighborhood.

"Now that," said Mucius, "is an abominable act. This Galilean sorcerer has lost me more than two hundred drachmes. What can I do? If I drag Him before the magistrates, He will say—for He is shrewd —that the swine threw themselves into the sea. In fact, they did; all that was needed was for one to take the lead. Just the same, this fellow is beginning to annoy me seriously."

. . . . . .

The woman, kneeling, was weeping with her head held in her hands.

"Master," said the Pharisees and scribes to Jesus, "this woman was taken in adultery. Moses commands

that such women shall be stoned to death. But what do You say?"

Mucius, just called back to Jerusalem by his affairs, came near to the group as Jesus was replying.

"Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone!"

"The remark is clever," thought Mucius, "but it doesn't prove anything. If one must be without sin to apply the law, there's nothing to do but abolish all courts. It's plain to be seen that this moralist is a celibate. I'd like to know what a husband would think of this clever judgment."

The woman just then raised her head a little, and Mucius saw that she was beautiful.

"Humph!" he said simply.

. . . . . .

This time when he left Jerusalem he went to Sychar, a town of Samaria.

Night was falling. Near the well in the public square, Jesus was talking with a woman, who with hands clasped on the edge of her jar, turned a rapt face towards Him. Mucius recognized her: she was a young widow, hospitable to strangers.

"Humph! Humph!" was all he said.

. . . . . .

From Sychar he went to Capernaum where he had some business, for his affairs covered a great deal of country.

One of his customers, named Simon, asked him to come to dinner. Jesus was also present. Mucius was pleased at this; he promised himself to speak out all he had upon his mind.

But when he was face to face with Jesus he did not dare. He excused himself by thinking that he did not wish to disturb his host's table by useless disputes.

Now, during the meal, a woman entered, one of those who dance in the taverns * and who make merchandise of their bodies; beautiful, painted, with red lips, blue eyelids, and with hips swathed in tinsel and silk of lively colors.

Mucius knew her.

"So it's you, Mary Magdalene? We shall be delighted to see you dance, my dear. But just the same, I advise you to keep a little show of decency in your movements, for we're with respectable people tonight."

But Magdalene drew near to Jesus in silence. She kneeled, kissed His feet, then, uncorking a vial, she poured the perfume upon them drop by drop, and then wiped them with her unbound hair.

Jesus let her do this. Mucius felt in himself the sensation of this long hair drawn along his bare feet, and he smiled.

Jesus spoke to him.

"Why, Mucius, do you think evil of Me in your heart?"

Mucius did not dare reply: he was himself astonished at his sudden timidity.

Jesus added.

"Your hour is not yet come."

. . . . . .

So Mary Magdalene, having renounced her way of life, retired to Bethany, to the house of her sister

* Here I attribute to Magdalene a social condition different from that in the story entitled *Saint Martha.* But that's of no importance.

Martha and her brother Lazarus, who were good people, and who in addition welcomed her with gladness.

Jesus visited them at times.

One day when Mucius went to Lazarus to buy his grain, he saw Mary seated at the feet of Jesus listening to Him, while Martha prepared the meal.

"Lord," said Martha suddenly, "do You find it right that Mary leaves me alone to serve You? Tell her then to help me a little."

"Martha, Martha!" answered Jesus. "You make trouble for yourself and you fret over a multitude of things. One thing alone is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part; I shall not prevent her."

"The better part?" murmured Mucius. "Ho, ho! I should say so! Of course they're pleased that poor Martha shall cook for them."

. . . . . .

Mucius met Jesus in many other circumstances; and every time he was scandalized. He was indignant at hearing Jesus encourage carelessness and indolence, preach with a bitter indifference the destruction of the city and all sorts of horrible catastrophes, preach hatred and contempt of riches, of priests, of governments, and all the properly constituted authorities.

"Certainly," mused Mucius, "society is not perfect. What sensible man, with a family and property, wants it to be overturned, for he is sure in advance that it will be replaced by something worse?"

A last thing finished by exasperating him.

One evening in the outskirts of Jerusalem, entering the inn where he had tied his ass, he learned from the

keeper that the apostles of Jesus had come, untied the beast, and had led it away without so much as a "by your leave." To all his protests they had replied, "Our Master needs it."

"This," burst out Mucius, "is plain robbery. I'll complain to the justice."

Next morning the ass returned alone to the inn.

Jesus was crucified that same day. When Mucius heard it, he spoke his mind.

"I was certain He would come to a bad end."

. . . . . .

Mucius was sixty years old. His affairs prospered. He was pleased with himself and thought he knew a thing or two. He had never had occasion to do evil deeds, so he considered himself good. And he approved the social order that had permitted him to become rich and important.

His wife died, leaving him a daughter of eighteen years, Neera.

A young man, with no money, who loved her and was loved in turn, asked her in marriage. Mucius refused him because of his poverty. The youth went off and jumped into the Lake of Tiberius.

Shortly after, Neera was carried off by a Roman horseman. Abandoned by her lover, she did not dare return to her father's house; she became one of those unfortunates who solicit passers-by at the street corners; and Mucius never heard news of her. But the memory of his child was a deep and tender wound.

To console himself, he married a Syrian thirty years younger. He discovered soon that she was deceiving him. He resolved in turn to kill her, to drive her off

shamefully, to drag her before the justice; and finally he pardoned her because she wept and because he loved her.

A fire destroyed his farmhouse at Bethlehem, and all his granaries, and all his cattle. A faithless steward carried off an immense sum. A succession of poor harvests completed his ruin.

Old as he was he could not find work. His wife, grown honest and faithful, could not earn enough for two. He was forced to beg. He lived on alms and descended to petty pilfering. He grew to hate the hardness of the wealthy and convinced himself that society was founded on deception and injustice.

He recalled confusedly the remarks of Jesus. One day, he believed that he was one of those unfortunates pitied by Jesus and sought after by Him so regularly.

That same day his wife carried to him some coins she had received from the disciple John, and she led him to the gathering of the Christians.

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Mucius recognized in the disciple one of the two fishermen to whom Jesus had said, "Sons of Zebedee, follow Me!"

He had the surprise of finding in the assembly his daughter Neera, reformed, wise, and content.

And he was so stirred that in a flash he believed in Christ.

"Isn't it strange," he said to the disciple, "that now I believe in Him Whose acts and words I blamed so often?"

"It is," explained John, "because you are poor and have suffered greatly. You used to say that Jesus did

not regard the family; it was because we do not enclose ourselves in the affections or the interests of the home that we have saved you from misery and hunger. A man owes to his parents *before* he owes to humanity; but he owes to humanity *more* than to his parents. These two truths, which seem often contradictory, are equally certain.

"You said that Jesus threatened property. But property is not indefinitely legitimate. Man has the right to the produce of his toil and even to the accumulation of that produce within the limits of his needs for sustenance, and a little for his ease and security, but not beyond. This indefinite limit is none the less a limit, and we are the better if we so place that limit that others reap the benefits.

"One should not be a thorough-going owner. You began to see that when you lived from the grain plucked in the fields and from fruit gathered from the trees. It would have been better to realize it when you yourself owned fields and orchards. You are still thinking of your swine. Must you be reminded that these swine had been unjustly acquired by your father-in-law, a strong and covetous man; a thing Jesus knew, as He knew all things?

"You said that Jesus was too indulgent toward women of evil lives (you even had a worse thought, but I know you harbor it no longer). Now you yourself have forgiven an adulterous wife, and it was one of your best actions. And it was the teaching of Jesus that made your wife good and faithful and redeemed your daughter Neera from the mire.

"Remain with us. We are happy. We live in com-

mon, in this district, in several houses. Each works according to his strength and eats according to his hunger; and we have something left to care for the sick and the old. Jesus wished that all the difficulties of life should be easily solved (except when He wishes to test us) by associating together, that is by love. We are the family made larger, waiting until we shall be the brotherhood of all mankind in God.

"And finally, if anything remains in the life of the Savior that embarrasses you, you will understand it as your heart becomes purer and your will stronger. And if you cannot make everything clear, you will remember that Jesus is the Son of God, and you will adore that mystery."

And Mucius added:

"Amen."

AN IDEALIST

OZIAS had been one of the first disciples of Jesus. He had a meditative disposition. While his companions, careless and gay, amused themselves in the chance encounters of the ways, hunted for their meals as opportunity afforded, and slept beneath the olive trees, Ozias remained for long hours reflecting on the words of Jesus.

He was extremely intelligent. Although merely a simple disciple, he discovered in the parables of the Master meanings that the apostles themselves had never dreamed of.

He knew better than the others what it was to "worship in spirit." And he cherished in Jesus the disdain of the vain ceremonies and the exterior observances of the ancient Law.

When Jesus said, "I am the bread of life," Ozias was the only one not astonished, the only one who immediately grasped what He meant.

And although he was quite pure, he was not at all astonished to see the Savior pardon the woman taken in adultery and the courtesan of Magdala.

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Three days after the crucifixion, when the holy women brought the news that the tomb was empty and when Mary told of her meeting with Jesus, all the brothers were smitten with the desire to see the Risen One, and they agreed to meet every day at the house

of one or another, hoping that the Savior would appear to them.

But Ozias declined to go to these meetings. They said to him, "You don't believe then?"

He answered, "Yes, on the contrary, because I do believe."

They said to him, "Since you don't wish to see Him, it's because you do not love Him?"

He answered, "It is not His earthly form that I love in Him."

The others, then, assembled, and Jesus appeared in the midst of them. They spoke to Ozias.

"We have seen Him. Come with us and you shall see Him."

He replied, "I believe you, but I shall not come."

"And I, I shall go, because I doubt."

Thus spoke Thomas, called Didymus, one of the twelve, who was not with the others when Jesus appeared.

Thomas spoke further.

"If I do not see in His hand the mark of the nails, if I do not put my finger in these wounds, and if I do not put my hand in the wound in His side, I shall not believe in Him."

Ozias gazed at him pityingly. Thomas was heavy of body and countenance. He had at once an appearance of dull simplicity and in his eyes, small and bright, the shrewdness of a merchant, honest but suspicious.

"Those really believe," said Ozias, "who have not wished to see yet who believe."

"Those," retorted Thomas, "are dreamers or persons called poets."

Thomas was therefore at the assembly, where he saw and touched Jesus, and Jesus said, "You have believed, because you have seen Me. Happy those who believe without having seen!"

When these words were repeated to him, Ozias pondered with himself.

"These are almost exactly the words I used myself, so clearly has the Master made me the true keeper of His spirit! O Lord, what need have I to pursue Your phantom, since I have You within me, and need only close my eyes to see You?"

And he could not help feeling superior to the brethren, having a soul finer than theirs.

. . . . . .

Ozias preached the gospel in his province of Alexandria. His preaching persuaded above all the philosophers, the poets, and those of subtle mind. And the church he founded was the most distinguished of all the churches.

Now at fifty years Ozias was still chaste. At that time he converted to the Christian faith a young Alexandrine widow named Myrrhina.

Myrrhina was beautiful, rich, cultured; she had a lively imagination and delicate nerves. Before knowing Christ, she had been initiated into several cults of Asia, such as those of Diana, of Cybele, of Iacchus, and of Adonis; and she had desperately loved the priests who had instructed her in these various religions. She was refined and singular in all her tastes. She "adored" black iris and the poems of Lycophron. Supple and slender, she dressed in delicate silks embroidered with large flowers. Ozias thought that this

soul—so unquiet and so elegant—was the most noble and precious he had ever met.

He believed that his own piety was purified by mingling with that of Myrrhina. She persuaded him that the essential thing is to love God, and that the true manner of loving Him is totally to abandon oneself to Him, to let Him live in us in our stead, to pay no regard to our acts, for our acts are merely the acts of our bodies. For faith alone justifies, and faith is nothing more than love, and our exterior actions have no significance whatsoever.

Ozias appreciated the generousness of this doctrine. It seemed to him that he could raise himself more easily toward God when he conversed with this friend. From this it came that one day, while their souls in ecstasy were exchanging sublime thoughts, they disdainfully allowed their bodies to do what they desired; and this abandon was frequently repeated.

Their shame became public. Ozias, summoned before the bishops, refused to confess his crime and do penance for it. He grew stubborn in his error and defended it by bizarre arguments. He went so far as to assert that the lower portions of the body, having been formed by the devil, belonged to the devil; that one means of liberating oneself from the power of the flesh is to reduce it by debauches, and that the actions of this "body of death" are below the notice of God.

But these doctrines of such refined spiritualness were badly understood by the bishops, and Ozias to his great astonishment was expelled from the Christian communion.

Shortly afterward, Myrrhina, having changed her whim and desiring to "lead the simple life," as she expressed it, left Ozias to follow a gladiator.

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Ozias perceived then the extravagance of his dreams and realized that perhaps, in their essence, they were merely the result of his passion for Myrrhina.

Terrified by his isolation, he wished to re-enter the church where he had known so many gentle and good friends. But still having in his bones the memory of the beautiful cultured widow he had no longer the strength to be pure. He could not admit that these pleasures that had been innocent to so many generations should be considered abominable. Doubts concerning a religion that condemned nature entered his mind, and as a result even concerning the mission and the divinity of Jesus.

He mused in his agony.

"If I had seen Him after the resurrection I should not doubt today; for I should then have the proof I lack, the proof without which I can no longer live in peace. But at least I can ask those who did see Him after the crucifixion. Their testimony will strengthen that of my senses, and by restoring my faith, make me strong and at peace again."

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So he set out to find those apostles and disciples who had seen the risen Christ. But most of them were dead; and so far as the survivors were concerned, hardly would Ozias arrive in a village where he was told he should find them, when by inexplicable luck he would hear that these holy pastors had just left.

So he traveled throughout Egypt, Italy, Achaia, and Asia Minor; lingering at times in the taverns where girls made music on the flute; then sobered, starting forth again on the search for the unattainable testimony.

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One day, at last, he was able to catch up with the Apostle Thomas. He spoke to him.

"You saw Him after His resurrection. I was present, forty years ago, when you told of it. Tell it again to me, and I shall believe again."

Thomas retold at length all he had seen and heard. He told of the holes in the hands and the wound in the side, the color of the scars, the shrunken chest, and the protruding ribs, the stuff of the robe, and the words of Jesus, and the names of the fish that Jesus had eaten.

But Ozias did not believe at all. He noticed that the old apostle added to his tale details he had not given the first time, and also that he was mistaken about the time of the appearance. He judged him in addition too simple in mind, credulous with all his crude shrewdness, and enfeebled by age.

He fled like a crazed man. Next morning they found him hanging from a lantern at the street corner.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE GOLDEN LEGEND

THE ELEVEN-THOUSANDTH VIRGIN

ETHERIUS, pagan king of England, having asked the hand of Ursula, daughter of the King of Brittany, was given by this princess three years to be converted to the Christian faith.

She resolved to make during these three years a grand pilgrimage to Rome. She and each of her ten ladies of honor would be accompanied by a thousand virgins. The King, her father, issued an edict in which he invited his subjects to send him eleven thousand virgins in three months' time.

Brittany furnished them easily.

They arrived at the palace of the King in crowds, and soon they had reached the total of ten thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine.

The only one missing was Cordula, daughter of poor fisherfolk, a good and pure child, but always condemned, so it seemed, by destiny, to be late.

She came into the world after her term, her mother having carried her nine months and a half. When she heard the edict of the King, she began to spin the linen thread to make herself a fine white robe to cut a proper figure in the virginal cortege. But her distaff went wrong continually and her thread broke. Then the weaver was sick and her cloth was not delivered as promised. Then the dressmaker, having measured her incorrectly, had to begin all over again. So that,

when Cordula finally presented herself at the palace of the King, the virgins, who had waited for her a long time, had just set out on eleven galleys for the port of Tita, situated at the mouth of the Rhine.

. . . . . .

Cordula was not cast down. She hired a little boat, and ordered the boatman to travel as rapidly as he could.

But when they had left the shore, the boatman seeing her fresh and pretty in her new robe, was moved by a guilty desire and wanted to let her know it.

Then she prayed.

"My God, I know that You do not blame your creatures for involuntary acts. So it is not for myself, but for your glory that I ask You to save me from this peril. For it will not be fitting and it will be unworthy of You if one of the eleven thousand virgins who render praise to You at Rome should be secretly soiled. No, You will not permit that the crime of a coarse man shall place a black bird among the doves."

And she addressed the boatman.

"And moreover," she added, "if you insist, I shall capsize the boat. But if you spare me, the salvation of your soul is certain; for I shall tell of it yonder to my companions, and eleven thousand sheep without stain shall perish for you."

The man, in whom all good feelings were not extinct, yielded to her reasoning. He began to row with all his strength, without raising his eyes.

As they approached the port of Tita, Cordula saw the eleven ships and she believed herself at the end of her troubles. But they were empty; Ursula and the

Virgins were even then sailing up the river on smaller vessels.

. . . . . .

"Oh!" said Cordula, "since they are going against the current, they will not go so fast, and I shall surely overtake them."

Having no money, she set out on foot. She begged from village to village; she slept in barns, or under the sky.

Once she washed in the river her robe soiled by the dust and mud of the roads. She counted on the sun's drying it rapidly. But rain fell. Cordula waited two days and then had to put on her dress still damp.

Another time, having entered a solitary hut to ask bread, she found an old woman sick in bed with no one to care for her. Cordula stayed with her until she was cured. The poor girl deserved all the more credit because all the time she was tortured by the flight of the hours and by the idea that the army of virgins was getting farther away. And this good deed made her lose another week.

One night, finally, she reached the town of Basle. Without looking at the emerald river or the violet silhouettes of the spires or the gables against the golden sky, she inquired about the passage of the virgins and learned that they had been welcomed with great pomp in all the churches, and then had moved on again three days ago.

They had money; they were well fed; they had hired eleven thousand carts, and later they crossed the Alps on eleven thousand mules.

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Cordula had only her legs. She resumed, on foot, her endless way. She walked, walked, careless of stones, stubble, dust, rain, or wind, with the gaze of her spirit ardently fixed on the goal of her journey. And days followed days, until by walking, one fine evening she saw Rome on the horizon.

They told her that the virgins had passed a month at Rome in holy rejoicings; they had been fêted by the Pope; they had left the day before to go to Cologne; and that thus they should be just one day on their way.

. . . . . .

Now "Two chiefs of Roman companies, perverse men; Maximus and Africanus, seeing at Rome this great multitude of virgins and knowing that many men and women went to consult with them, feared that the Christian religion had received a large increase. And so they had sent emissaries to Julius, their relative, prince of the Goths and Huns, so that marching against them with his soldiers, he could kill them when they would be arrived at Cologne."

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And that is why, as Cordula drew near to Cologne (some hours too late) she saw in a wide plain, the eleven thousand virgins in white robes with Princess Ursula and the ten ladies of honor and the Goths and the Huns discharging their arrows upon them regularly. The little martyrs with their rounded foreheads stood erect, and as they waited for the arrows, seemed to brush aside a large fly, as one can see in the figures that Memling painted on the shrine of Saint Ursula. They

fell sedately, arms tight to their sides, in long rows, with little timid cries.

And there was soon only a great stretch of white robes, spotted here and there with blood; and the plain seemed like a strange field of snow marked in lines of crimson poppies.

Cordula wished to join her companions. But her dress, after her wanderings, was in such a pitiable condition that she was ashamed and did not believe herself well dressed enough for martyrdom.

And perhaps also because she was afraid.

. . . . . .

She hid herself in a wood and dropped asleep. An angel appeared to her in her sleep.

"You have done me wrong, dear Cordula," he said. "The Lord sent down eleven thousand and eleven angels to receive the holy souls of Ursula, her ten followers, and the eleven thousand virgins as they were released from their fleshly prisons. I should carry yours away; do you wish that I return to Paradise with empty hands while the other angels laugh at me?"

Next morning, Cordula appeared alone to the barbarians, who slaughtered her disdainfully. And her sacrifice was assuredly more horrible and more meritorious than that of the virgins who died together.

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Nevertheless they forgot her in the list of martyrs and in the annual fête instituted in their honor.

But she appeared before a holy abbot who had a special devotion for the eleven thousand virgins (without preferring any of them), told him her story, and

timidly ventured the wish that they might celebrate her fête on the morrow of that of her companions.

So was it done; and she had her mass for herself alone.

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Certainly she had earned it, this ingenuous patron of the down-and-outers, the unlucky, the tardy—of all those who are always behind time.

SAINT MARTHA

LAZARUS and his sisters Mary and Martha lived together in Bethany.

Mary was beautiful, brilliant, and passionate; Martha was mild, sensible, and modest. She admired her sister and from childhood had been accustomed to efface herself before her and give way to her in everything.

When Mary began to conduct herself badly, Martha felt great shame; but she remained indulgent towards her and did all she could to lessen the anger of Lazarus. She hid as well as she could the outbreaks of Mary and paid with her own money the debts the younger woman ran up with the dealers in robes, jewels, and perfumes.

At the same time she did all the housekeeping, kept everything in order, and regularly directed the work on the surrounding farm.

It was perhaps this silent devotion that aroused the first remorse in Mary's heart.

. . . . . .

As Mary had met Jesus and had changed her life to please Him, Martha also believed in the new Prophet.

Jesus often came to the house of Bethany. Mary sat at His feet without moving. Martha in the meantime prepared dinner.

One day she spoke to Jesus.

"Lord, do you find it right that my sister leaves me

alone to serve You? Tell her then to help me a little."

"Martha, Martha!" Jesus replied to her. "You make trouble for yourself and you fret over a multitude of things. One thing alone is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part, I shall not prevent her."

"Lord," Martha went on, "I was not speaking seriously. I know that Mary is more intelligent than I am. It is quite natural that You take pleasure in talking with her, for she understands all You say. Besides I am just as happy to serve You as she is to listen to You. So I too have chosen the wise thing, since I've chosen what is suitable for me."

. . . . . .

When Lazarus died both sisters had at once the idea of calling the Rabbi. But while Mary stayed in her room to weep, Martha went to meet Jesus long before He reached the village.

And when Lazarus, hands and feet bound with wrappings and face swathed in linen, had come forth from the tomb, Martha, thoughtful and practical, brought food to him; "for," she explained, "dead for four days; that certainly would make a man hungry."

. . . . . .

Now, some time after the death of Jesus, "Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and their servant Matille, Maximinius, and Cedon—the man born blind whom Jesus had cured, were placed by the pagans in a ship without sail and rudder and given to the waters to perish."

A vessel towed the boat, then abandoned it in mid-sea.

When the martyrs were alone in the waters, Martha spoke to her companions.

"The man who brought us here at the command of the pagans was not wicked or insensible to profit. I gave him several pieces of gold, for which he allowed me to hide several old boards, a hatchet, and some nails in the bottom of this boat, and bring this basket of provisions."

Cedon, who had been a carpenter, fashioned a plank to serve as rudder and fixed it at the stern with some old ropes. The episcopal staff of Maximinius served as mast and Mary's dress was stretched as a sail.

"This," commented Martha, "will let us meet with some vessel that will pick us up."

"God," insisted Mary, "has no need of all this to help us. A miracle would cost Him nothing."

"A miracle?" seized Martha. "We should believe ourselves unworthy of one and at least not hope for it until we have done all we can for ourselves."

God did deign, in truth, to show His graciousness as well as His power, in using the humble devices due to the foresight of Martha. He filled the robe transformed to sail with such a wind that in three days the bark reached the port of Marseilles.

. . . . . .

"As no one in the city wished to receive them the newly arrived took refuge under the portico of a temple, and waited until the people should crowd into the temple to worship the idols."

"Speak to them," said Martha to Mary. "They will listen to you because you are beautiful."

Mary spoke. She preached the Christ, Son of God, and saved humanity redeemed; and many were moved

by the words that came from such a beautiful mouth.

Lazarus spoke in his turn, and produced some impression by the account of his own death and resurrection.

Meantime Martha went from group to group.

"It is for poor people most of all that Jesus came. He did not like the rich. His reign will be one of justice and goodness."

And although she was neither beautiful nor eloquent, she moved more hearts than Mary and Lazarus.

. . . . . .

In the small house where they first lived Martha cooked and washed. She went to market, gossiped with the merchants, and converted many of them. Later when the believers were more numerous, she cleaned the church and took care of the sacred vestments of her brother.

But Mary, ill at ease among so many men, retired to a cave in a mountain. Better to show her disgust at earthly things and her desire to rise above them, she had chosen a spot completely arid, without trees, without grass, and without water.

There, clad only in her hair, which to tell truth was extremely long and thick, she passed her life in prayer and contemplation; and from time to time invisible angels raised her from the earth by her two elbows.

Martha rejoiced at the miraculous favors shown to her little sister.

"She deserves them," she would say. "But for me, besides being unworthy of them, I believe they would

not interest me. I haven't enough brains to do nothing but pray and meditate always."

Every day she bore a crock of wine and bread to Mary. One day Mary spoke to her.

"Don't take this trouble, my dear Martha. I no longer have any need to eat or drink, for God nourishes me with the music of the angels."

"Well, that's going fine!" said Martha. "I'll have the more time to give to the poor of Jesus."

And while Mary in her cloak of hair listened to celestial music, Martha mended the clothes of Lazarus and of Maximinius, played with the little children, and cared for the sick and aged. And gathering about her the widows and the maidens who did not wish to marry, she founded the first Convent of the Little Sisters of the Poor.

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Now God wished to reward this humble and sensible saint by doing for her, without letting her know of it, a particularly brilliant and striking miracle.

"There was at that time, beside the Rhone, in a forest between Arles and Avignon, a dragon shaped like a fish in one half of his body, larger than an ox, longer than a horse, with a tail furnished with enormous teeth; and he attacked all the travelers passing on the river, and he sank all the ships. He had come by sea from Galatia where he had been born of a sea-serpent. And this dragon was called La Tarasque."

One day, the dwellers in a near-by city resolved to go fight the monster and destroy him. Three or four hundred in number, armed with lances, scythes, hatchets, cross-bows, helmeted, protected by coats of

mail or breastplates, they marched noisily toward the forest, under the leadership of a certain Tartarinus.

Martha went with them to care for the wounded (for she knew there would be some).

But they missed the way, and Martha, separated from them for a moment, suddenly found herself, she could not tell how, face to face with the monster alone.

Thinking herself doomed she made the sign of the cross. And immediately the monster came to her with an air of submission; and Martha passed her belt around his neck and led him out of the forest.

At the edge of the river she met the band of warriors. They were astonished to see her with such a follower; but the most astounded of all was Martha herself. All the spectacular features of her adventure annoyed her simple nature. It seemed to her that she was not the saint of this miracle.

"No, no," she kept repeating to the compliments. "I had nothing to do with it, I tell you. You must thank God first of all. But I must also insist that the monster smelled you near him; and doubtless he was filled with fear."

Then the soldiers, regaining their courage, wanted to kill him with spears and stones.

"Oh!" exclaimed Martha. "That is not kind, now that he has become so tame. You will do better to keep him in a corner of the city park. He will be satisfied with coarse rye and bran bread, and you can show him to visitors for a small fee, and you can give part of the money to the poor and the rest to the Church. In this way the Tarasque will amuse and nourish men instead of eating them."

"You are right, by jucky!" agreed the Christians of Tarascon.

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This miracle is the last fact that is known of the life of Saint Martha.

We know that this mild and common-sensed saint became in after years the most popular among the dwellers in Provence.

The irony of divine indulgence so willed it.

THE SECOND LIFE OF THE SEVEN SLEEPERS

THERE were seven Christians of Ephesus named Maximinius, Molchus, Marcien, Denis, John, Serapion, and Constantine. They were walled up in the time of the Emperor Decius in a cavern of Mount Celion and there they slept by the will of God.

Now, in the thirtieth year of the reign of Theodosius, some masons needing stone opened the cavern; and the Seven Sleepers, waking, believed they had slept only a single night. But they were informed that they had slept two hundred years and that during their long night the Christian religion had replaced the worship of false gods throughout the Empire.

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A procession came to meet the awakened Seven Sleepers in their cave to escort them to Ephesus. After two centuries of slumber their countenances were calm and their skin as fresh as roses. And their minds had preserved the same flower of youth.

While they descended the ways of the mountain-side they tried to picture to themselves what they were going to see.

They had left the Church small and persecuted, but resplendent with the holiest virtues. At that time Christians practiced justice, poverty, humility, charity, and chastity. Now that the Church was triumphant and that the Emperor himself was only the most

prominent of the faithful, doubtless the entire world practiced these virtues; and it must be a ravishing spectacle.

They pictured an immense society of brothers aiding one another and sharing their property in common; sober, gentle, and pure, and animated by innocent joy; distributed in little dwellings under beautiful shade trees, and chanting hymns from morning to night; no more army, no magistrates, no police; in short an earthly foretaste of the Kingdom of God.

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They entered Ephesus by the principal gate that was surmounted by a cross, ignoble gallows now become a mark of honor. They were rejoiced by the pealing of bells; they gazed with delight at the number and the grandeur of the churches, the shops in which crucifixes and holy images were sold, the pious inscriptions consecrating the public buildings, and all else that attested to the assured reign of the new religion, of that faith for which they had suffered two centuries earlier.

But, dazzled by the magnificence of the reception, deafened by the acclamations, they did not at first notice that at the very moment when richly garbed women threw flowers to them from the balconies of their palaces, the police thrust back the crowd of common people who tried to touch the robes of the seven triumphant youths.

They were conducted to the richest church of Ephesus. They were installed in gold chairs before the high altar. The Bishop, glittering with gold and jewels, celebrated their sanctity. He explained that they had been in the hands of God instruments of a

great purpose. For recently heretics had sprung up who denied the resurrection of the dead. God had wished to confound them by resurrecting these seven martyrs.

The church was adorned with mosaics, marbles, and precious metals. In their coarse wool two centuries old, left upon them by respect or admiration for the picturesque, the Seven Sleepers were surrounded by elegant ladies and high functionaries who gazed curiously at their pink and smooth faces. But the common people were shoved back into the far away nave by church servants armed with halberds. And the Seven Sleepers recalled the bareness of the catacombs and the equality of the first brethren.

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They were all the rage. A patrician gave a great dinner for them. They were so affected by their adventure or so unaccustomed to speech that they had trouble in expressing themselves. Their old-fashioned accent made hearers laugh. People questioned them on what they had felt during their two centuries of slumber; they replied that they had felt nothing. People then questioned them on the customs, the usages, and the events of the time of Emperor Decius; but as they were only simple folk and had never observed large movements, they could make only insignificant and brief replies. People soon left them undisturbed and talked of other things.

They were astonished that the women present in their costumes and even in their talk paid little regard to Christian modesty. One of them stared at the

youngest martyr in such a manner that he was obliged to drop his eyes.

The wines were exquisite, the food abundant as well as delicate, and quite effective in stirring in the veins of the guests all the obscure powers of flesh and blood. The conversation became unrestrained. The Seven Sleepers learned from the remarks of the other guests that many of the faithful of both sexes regularly broke the rules of conduct; that many of the baptised men were covetous, shrewd, liars, unjust, unchaste; that there were also not only still in the world rich and poor, but oppressors and oppressed; and that a large number of Christians lived exactly as had the worshippers of false gods. And they saw that there were still slaves, and that they were treated harshly.

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In the monastery where they were housed, they discovered through the discussions at which they were present that during two hundred years the doctrine of the Church had become burdened by subtleties that the first believers had ignored of which the Seven Sleepers understood nothing. They were appealed to as judges. They excused themselves humbly, and this lessened their prestige. But they could not help seeing that these learned monks, who refined continually upon matters of doctrine, overlooked the practice of the most elementary apostolic virtues and lived abundantly on the revenues of lands bestowed upon them by the Emperor—that is to say, upon the labor of the poor.

When the Seven Sleepers walked along the streets they were scandalized at every step. Women of evil

life spread their diabolic traps for the passers-by. Everywhere were theaters in which modesty was continually outraged. One day a theatrical manager tried to hire them for his troupe. He wanted them to relate to audiences their stories and their "impressions" and to enact some "scenes of the catacombs." And he was amazed at their indignant refusal.

They visited the slums. By diligent search they came upon some souls like their own. But they could not conceive how in a state where all the inhabitants and even the Emperor professed the faith of the Gospels, there could be such suffering unrelieved.

They said to themselves: "What does the Emperor do then?"

And by asking that they learned that Theodosius, his Most Christian Majesty, had just had seven thousand men slaughtered in the hippodrome of Thessalonica.

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Each day their hearts filled with bitterness. They were more disturbed than in those days when tracked and hunted by the heathen they had sought refuge in the tombs.

People had expected them to do miracles; and as God had not granted them the power, they again fell in esteem. And as they dared at the same time to find fault with private and public morals, people found them annoying.

In the meantime—and this was worst of all—people forgot them. The curiosity their failures had aroused soon vanished. And this grieved them, humble though they were.

They found themselves out of place, even in their

shelter, where their holiness appeared old-fashioned and old-fogy. They were ill at ease, yet they lacked courage to move.

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One day they were explaining to an old experienced priest their disillusionment and their sorrow at having found so little difference between the manners of a Christian empire and those of old pagan society. With anguish they asked, "Did Christ then come in vain?"

The old man answered them.

"No, no! Don't despair! There is a change, in spite of all, I assure you. There are more virtue and gentleness, and delicacy of the conscience, an enrichment of moral sensitiveness. Throughout the world there are holy spirits, souls with a new heroism, souls such as were never seen in pagan times. As for the others, it is something to recognize and accept the truth, even if one can't live up to it. We've had many good deaths, or at least, many correct deaths. The new faith works great good among the barbarians; it reduces their fierceness, bends them through pity, leads them by hope or fear of another existence. You lament that the precepts of the Gospel are not strictly obeyed? It must be admitted at once that neither commerce, nor industry, nor art, nor the interests and defense of a huge empire would know how to adapt themselves to them. I see them as entirely applicable only to small groups of workers, artisans, or wandering shepherds. I'll say more; a society founded on absolute commands of renunciation, equality, common poverty, would be worthless unless all its members observed them wholly, or to express it otherwise, unless

all its members were saints. And it would hardly be sensible to count on that. The Church has had to reduce the rigor of these commandments, and it has done wisely; for if it should happen that certain of its maxims should be hypocritically professed and applied by wicked and faithless men, only disorder and anarchy would follow. These sweeping precepts set up an ideal for which one must strive in private life; forced into institutions, they would be ineffective or dangerous. For finally—"

But the Seven Sleepers, amazed and horrified, had covered their faces.

Unmoved, the old priest resumed.

"Venerable brothers, if you are forced to think so badly of things, why did you wake up?"

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For some time the Seven Sleepers continued their melancholy and scandalized life.

A tradition (suspect, it is true) reports that two of them turned out sadly. The youngest, Malchus, let himself be ensnared by the artifice of a perverse woman who thought it pleasant to seduce a miraculous hero and to have as lover a young man two hundred and twenty-two years old. Another, Maximinius, pretended to reestablish purity in the corrupted faith. He preached at street corners, thundering against the rich and the priests, but only succeeded in getting himself into prison.

The grief, the distress, and the isolation of the remaining five Sleepers were redoubled. They saw that they could never adapt themselves to the things to

which they had returned, and one night they prayed to God to put them to sleep until the Last Judgment.

Next morning they were found dead in their cells. Their countenances had regained the "freshness of roses."

ON THE MARGIN OF THE CHANSONS DE GESTES

THE VOW OF VIVIEN

VIVIEN was reared in the castle of his uncle William and his aunt Blanchefleur.

He divided his time among his horse, skill in arms, and the exercises of devotion.

He represented to himself the earth as divided into two parts: the Christians, friends of God; the pagans, His enemies; above, God, the Virgin, and the assembly of saints leaned down over the world, interested in all its struggles, and often intervening with miracles.

Vivien was as delicate of countenance and white of skin as any girl, but his muscles were stronger than steel. He combined the piety of a little nun with the bravery of a knight errant. And he prepared himself for chivalry as for a sacrament.

When Vivien kneeling before his uncle William with the short nose had received from him the accolade, he arose and said:

"Good uncle, I shall make a vow. Before Dame Blanchefleur, my aunt and godmother, who has reared me so tenderly, before you, before all your peers, I vow to God that I shall never recoil one step before the pagans."

"Now there," said William gently, "is an ill-considered vow. There is no man so powerful that he need not flee when he is too hard pressed. Why even I, in a battle, never wait to be mortally wounded. My dear

nephew, you must be careful of yourself to succor others. And flight that saves your life is a good thing."

"Uncle William, mark well. Never before Persians, Turks, or Saracens shall I yield a step. I promise it to the Master of Heaven."

"Then, my poor boy, you will never live."

Dame Blanchefleur began to weep.

"My child," she said, "you are going to bring a great grief upon us."

"Godmother, I have sworn, and even should I desire, I cannot recall my oath."

"The Pope of Rome can loose you."

"The Pope of Rome is far distant. And he will not release me against my will."

"Farewell then, my nephew. I shall pray doubly for you."

Shortly afterwards, Vivien persuaded his uncle William, his six other uncles, and all his cousins with ten thousand vassals to depart to seek the pagans. For to him the life of a knight meant to advance the kingdom of God in this world.

They warred in Spain for seven years. Never did Vivien transgress his vow. Never did he recoil a step. Once in a mêlée, rather than recoil, he flung himself over the head of his horse and fell upon the horse of a Saracen chieftain. So astounded was the pagan that Vivien cut his throat without any difficulty.

They returned to Provence and for repose set up their tents in Aliscans.

One morning they saw approach a Saracen fleet which

discharged upon the shore a host of soldiers, dark as so many devils.

The Christians were weary of such a wasting war. The pagans appeared innumerable. But Vivien said to his companions:

"Have no fear of these miscreants, whom God loves not. Many of you shall die here, but your souls shall mount to Paradise. Moreover, if we do not flee, God will aid us."

"Nephew," said William, "this is folly. The pagans are too many. We shall do better to leave."

"I have made a vow," returned Vivien, "never to flee."

"This is not fleeing," said William. "It's merely refusing to engage in battle."

"Do as you will," said Vivien. "Because of my vow, I remain here."

"Well, for my part, I shall remain because of you," said William.

"We, too," said the other knights.

The black line of pagans advanced across the yellow sand.

The seven uncles of Vivien embraced one another. Followed by their vassals they moved to meet the Saracens. And they circled as closely as they could round Vivien to make the fulfilment of his vow the easier.

For the obligation not to recoil a step exposed him to numerous and lusty blows. Already he was covered with wounds. His blood gushed through several cracks in his helmet and several holes in his coat of mail.

While he was fighting with the Emir Derame, his horse shied and as Vivien offered his side the Emir took advantage of the opening and pierced his lung with his lance.

But the youth clung to the shoulders of his horse. The animal bore him away from the mêlée and let him slip to the ground beside a spring in the shade of a huge round oak.

Now the pagans were vanquished. But William having lost sight of his nephew sought for him anxiously. He discovered him at last beside the spring. He believed him dead.

He fell upon his knees; kissed him on the mouth. Then he laid his hand upon the boy's breast and felt life flickering in his heart.

"My nephew, are you still alive?"

Vivien opened his eyes.

"Yes. But I have little strength. Uncle William, since no priest is near, confess me, for I'm going to die."

And the youth, clasping his hands, began to recite his sins.

"Uncle, when I took arms, I vowed to God that I should never flee. Now I fear that I gave ground a little while past. How, I do not know. But I'm afraid that I've broken my vow."

"Rest assured," said William. "I was watching you at exactly that moment. Your horse carried you to the side, but not to the rear."

"Uncle, I'm afraid I moved back, and that made me despair. I pray the Lord Jesus to pardon me this in return for my death."

But Vivien did not die this time. Carried to the

Castle of Orange, he was nursed by his aunt and godmother so well that his wounds healed.

One evening when he was with her in his room, he said:

"Aunt, I believe that I shall soon be able to start out again to war."

"You are still quite feeble," said Blanchefleur. "And besides, haven't you done enough for the cause of God?"

"I shall not have done enough so long as there remains in me a drop of blood and a spark of life."

"But aren't you tired of killing men and more men, you with your gentle spirit that resembles that of a young girl?"

"True it is that I am courteous with my peers, charitable to the poor, just to all, and that I have never done harm to any Christian. But I am all these because I know the divine will. I must therefore strive to spread this divine power and wipe out its enemies."

"There may also be," said Blanchefleur, "some courteous and charitable pagans."

"To me it seems impossible," said Vivien, "but, if there are, God will give them credit for it."

"If only," resumed Blanchefleur, "you hadn't taken that vow that increases your danger of death—"

"A knight should be braver than other men, and I desire to be the bravest of all knights."

"But that's pride, Vivien."

"No, godmother, since God inspires it. And besides—you are my lady and it was because I thought of you that I made my vow. I want you to be proud because of me."

"Proud, I am. But so anxious! Oh, your dear little body is already ravaged by scars."

"But, please God, there are still places for more wounds. And you shall cure them, godmother."

"Vivien, my dear, don't leave me any more."

"Don't weep, godmother; for your tears distress me without changing my purpose."

"If you leave again, my Vivien, you will never return."

"Perhaps. But what of it? This earthly life of expiation is only fleeting. Perfect life is above. You will pray for me, godmother?"

"Day and night, Vivien."

"And every time I am in great danger I shall be able to say to myself that even at that moment you are thinking of me?"

"Assuredly; you may."

"Then, godmother, I shall depart with a tranquil spirit."

And in truth he did set out again with his uncles and their vassals.

They went even into Africa where in the desert on a burning day they met the Saracen army.

The assault was terrible. The uncles of Vivien surrounded him and protected him as best they could so that he might keep his vow. But there came a moment when Vivien, still weak from his wounds and pressed by a pagan so giantlike he seemed a tower, could no longer advance or indeed remain where he was. He must fall back or die.

"Then I shall die," the youth told himself.

But he retained a tiny bit of hope because he recalled

that at that very instant Dame Blanchefleur was praying for him in the oratory of the Castle of Orange.

Suddenly a shout of fear broke from the ranks of the enemy. The Saracens had just noticed above the army of Christians another army larger and more imposing.

At the cries of his companions the giant Saracen turned, saw that they were looking at something in the air, and caught sight of the ethereal army.

Vivien was able to advance one pace. Soon fear seized the pagans. The Christian knights pursued them and wrought great slaughter. And thus, once again, Vivien kept his vow.

A learned man later explained that people had often seen such effects as this that had terrified the Saracens produced in the desert by intense heat.

But it pleased Vivien better to believe that God had performed this miracle for him and that his miracle had been in answer to the prayers of his godmother.

ON THE MARGIN OF VILLEHARDOUIN

OF A FRENCH KNIGHT AND A DAME OF CONSTANTINOPLE

IN the year of grace 1200, the Knight Renaud de Celletes took the cross under the leadership of his Suzerain, the Count Pierre de Bracieux.

Renaud was a simple and crude youth, who until this time had never seen anything but the good city of Orleans and the great forests of Sologne.

Passing through Paris he joined the main army commanded by the Marquis Boniface de Montferrat; rode through Burgundy, past Mount Joux, Mount Cenis, through Lombardy, and saw without much astonishment many things that were to him absolutely new. He was not very curious and not capable of deep reflection, but he loved action and adventure. In addition he was a docile Christian firmly set in his faith in the midst of all the agitations of his robust body.

He sojourned in Venice where he remarked that "there were from twelve to fifteen hundred bridges, both large and small, both of wood and of stone, and more boats than there are horses and mules in Paris."

Then he was at Corfu. He aided in the capture of Andre and of Aire, and landed at Chalcedony with twenty thousand other Crusaders, French and Venetians. The Crusaders besieged Constantinople where they had promised to restore the Emperor Alexis, and on April 14, 1204, they entered the city.

After having bestowed uncomprehending glances

upon the golden city with its palaces of marble, its lofty columns surmounted by statues, and at its church cupolas more numerous than the days of the year, they scattered about the city to collect their booty.

With the little band of his men at arms, Renaud forced his way into a house painted in bright colors where lived a young widow named Theodosia.

While his companions invaded the cellars and the kitchens where they seized upon the first serving women they met, Renaud, black with sweat and dust, made his way through several rooms paved with mosaics and lighted by casements trellised with gold; he knocked over several statuettes—not knowing that they were by Praxiteles; and while as he advanced from chamber to chamber the women fled at his approach, he finally entered the most secret apartment where a young woman clad in light silks was praying before sumptuous ikons.

Excited by the recent battle and also by the privations of a long siege, he threw himself upon the perfumed widow and possessed her by force, in spite of her cries. After this, slightly ashamed, he gazed at her more closely and perceived that she was not entirely displeased.

Theodosia was so little angered that she smiled at him and by a gesture invited him to remain.

He remained several hours. He dared not pillage the house, although that was why he was there. But since in the capture of the city he did not wish to be poorer than others, he sallied out with his companions to pillage elsewhere. Soon he carried back a load of gold and silver, of plates and precious stones, satins and

cloth of gold, garments of vair and ermine, and asked of Theodosia permission to deposit his spoils in a room of her palace.

From then on, he did not quit her; for he was a captive of her eyes, of the form of her body, and of something else that he had never met in the women of Orleans and Burgundy.

In his expeditions and during the siege of the city he had learned a little of the popular Greek; at the end of a short time as a result of his giving himself to it, he was able to understand the speech of his lady and made himself fairly well understood by her.

She taught him the pleasures of bathing and the delights of cleanliness.

He had known only brutal and sudden love. She revealed to him another kind of love which made his cheeks sink in and his knees weaken. She read to him the verses of ancient poets beside which the trifling songs of the trouvères seemed dry and stuttering. At the same time he began to have glimmerings of the beauty of the old city with its cupolas of gold. His spirit and his senses became habituated to delicacies that he had never desired or even dreamed of before.

He submitted to Theodosia as to a creature more perfect and knowing than he and she held him by a mixture of languor and ardor, by her suppleness, her mystery, and her perfumes.

Meanwhile he rejoiced in seeing her so pious, even devout, ceaselessly kneeling before her ikons and mixing God up in her most frivolous conversation.

However, "it was cried in the whole army by the Marquis Boniface de Montferrat, by the Barons, and

by the Doge of Venice that all the booty should be brought together and assembled, as it had been promised and sworn under pain of excommunication. And the places designated were four churches, where were stationed as guards both French and Venetians, the most loyal that could be found. And thereupon all began to carry in the spoils and make a pile of it." (Villehardouin, LVI)

The entire mass was then to be divided fairly among the Crusaders.

Renaud made plans to have carried to one of the churches all the spoils that he had deposited in the house of Theodosia. But the fair widow said to him:

"That belongs to me!"

There were vases of chased gold, stuffs stiff with embroidery, rare jewels, and thick furs.

Renaud hesitated, thinking of the excommunication. He explained moreover that his share would be given to him as to the other knights. But Theodosia, lacing her bare arms around him, whispered to him.

"Let your conscience be reassured, my dear soul. God, who is entirely justice, permits you to keep all the spoils you have won. Your share should be as your merit. It would not be just that your portion should be merely equal to that of the other Crusaders when you surpass them all in intellect and courage. Above all, these perishable goods which did belong to you, since you captured them now belong to me, for you have given them. Assuredly you would not wish to take them away from me again."

She succeeded in convincing him, by means of skilful

caresses, so well that he sent to the church only a few spoils of base value.

But he was denounced by one of his companions, Gerard de Beaugency, as having kept back a part of the loot.

He was in a sad case; for as Messire Geoffroi de Villehardouin wrote, "Upon those who were then convicted of theft justice was done, and there were many hanged. The Count de Saint-Paul had hanged, with his shield at his neck, one of his own knights who had kept back something."

But Theodosia had an idea.

"My dear friend," she said to Renaud, "you must give the lie to your accuser and demand the judgment of God against him, as is the custom among the French. The Barons will not be able to refuse, and if, as I believe, God approves the reason for which you have kept the spoils, he will show it in making you victorious."

The judgment of God was granted to the good knight. As he appeared somewhat weakened, Theodosia made him drink a philter compounded by a negress. It gave him a momentary strength. And Renaud, having slain his accuser in single combat, was proclaimed innocent.

Now Theodosia was one of those persons, of whom there were many in Constantinople who loved to discuss and refine on matters of faith either for vanity over their keenness of mind, or for bending dogmas to some secret whim of their senses.

One day when she was in Renaud's arms, she suddenly exclaimed:

"Oh, sinful flesh! Accursed flesh where ceaselessly grief springs from pleasure; never, never satisfied!"

And as Renaud showed his astonishment:

"My sweet friend," she added, "do you believe that Christ had two natures or only one?"

"I don't know," said Renaud, "but is this quite the moment—"

"I must know, my sweet friend, for the question is important. Just think, if Christ had another nature than the divine one, we should have to admit that he could be, even as we are, troubled in his senses; an intolerable thought that would taint his celestial purity. Secondly, notice this: the flesh of Christ could not be of the same substance as ours, for ours is formed by something that comes from a man and something that comes from a woman, but no man shared in the conception of the Word. Notice finally, my sweet friend, that it is impossible to apprehend two natures in a single body. To pretend that Christ had two natures is as bad as saying that there are four persons in the holy Trinity. What have you to say to that?"

"Nothing at all," said Renaud.

"Then," she persisted, "tell me that you believe in one nature. I must hear you say it, that I may feel our two souls more closely joined. Say it, my love, I beg of you."

"I tell you that I know nothing about it," said Renaud, suddenly seized with distrust. "I'm no clerk, and I'm afraid of offending God if by chance you're mistaken."

"Oh!" she exclaimed. "You wicked person. You have no confidence in me!" And she wept.

On the morrow Renaud questioned one of the chaplains of the army on this point which disturbed him.

The chaplain was slightly amazed at the question. But reflecting that the city was full of occult heretics and that it might be wise to furnish the faithful against their seductions, he patiently explained to Renaud that Christ had two natures, at once distinct and united; he must have been God to redeem us and he must have been human to suffer; such was the decree of the holy council of Chalcedonia, and any who believed otherwise were heretics and enemies of God and of his Holy Church.

"Two natures?" repeated Renaud. "You say two natures?"

"I say two natures," replied the chaplain.

"Two natures," murmured Renaud, not to forget.

He returned to Theodosia, certain now of what he should believe.

But for several days she did not speak of theology. Only she seemed to try more and more by her embraces to destroy the strength of her lover.

One night he heard her murmur:

"Tell me, my dear, that you believe."

"What now, my love?"

"In one nature as in one person. Tell me, my tender lover."

Renaud at this moment was leaning over her. He thought that he saw in her eyes an abyss and that this abyss was hell.

She drew him towards her mouth, repeating:

"Say that you believe! I want you to say it!"

Held in her heretic arms, he was afraid—afraid of

yielding to temptation and damning himself forever.

He broke from her arms. Then he slipped his two thumbs beneath the chin of Theodosia and pressed them tight upon her throat until she made not the slightest movement.

ON THE MARGIN OF JOINVILLE

THE RENEGADE

KING LOUIS had been for several days a prisoner of the infidels. He was lodged at Mansourah in a fairly comfortable house. One evening he had just dined on a little salt meat and some dried greens and, seated in the courtyard near a jet of water, was conversing with the Sire Joinville when one of his pages announced that a Saracen, a fine-looking man and well dressed wished to see him.

The Saracen entered. He was, in fact, a well-favored youth; but he had not the slightly curved nose, nor the amber skin, nor the black thin beard that marks the greater part of the rich Saracens. Rather in his features and countenance he resembled some citizen from the Ile-de-France.

He saluted the King with every mark of respect and addressed him in the purest French.

"Sire, I bring you flowers. I've added a few jars of milk, some freshly gathered fruit, and some vegetables now in season. I know that you suffer from the discomforts felt by all Frenchmen in this land, and I've believed that these small gifts will be welcome to you."

The King gazed at the Saracen attentively.

"Where did you learn French?" he asked him.

"Sire," the man said simply, "I have always known it, for I was a Christian."

Then the King said in a firm voice but with a tone of sadness:

"I cannot accept your gifts. Depart. I will not speak with you."

Joinville conducted the stranger out, but being curious by nature, he detained him in a room and questioned him.

"Who are you and why are you here?"

"I am," replied the man, "Ali-Eddin, merchant of Mansourah. But my real name is Gautier and I was born at Provins. I came to Egypt in the year 1239 with the Duke of Burgundy. I settled here to engage in trade, and I gave up my faith to be undisturbed by the infidels. I sell carpets, silks, perfumes, sometimes slaves. I serve as an intermediary between Christians and Mohammedans, and both have praised me."

"But don't you realize that if you die in this condition you will be damned and go to hell?"

"True, but I think about it as little as possible. I believe that no religion is better than Christianity. But, if I give up Mohammedanism I shall have to clear out of here and leave behind all my property. And I fear the reproaches and poverty if I return to your country. Every day people would say, 'Behold the renegade.' I'd rather stay here, rich and tranquil."

"But don't you realize that at the Day of Judgment when every one will behold his sin you will have to endure worse reproaches than those you fear now?"

"I am still young, and the Day of Judgment is a long time off, while my wealth and my pleasures are close at hand."

"But don't you feel trouble and regret in your heart when you see men from your own land ready to die for the faith you have abandoned?"

"Surely. And that's why I'm ready to do for them all I can. The first time I saw you, you and your companions, I tearfully recalled the days of my childhood, my town of Provins, its churches, its convents, and the sound of its bells, and the wheat fields of Brie. The Saracens are not bad fellows, but I cannot talk with them of my past. And then they are more voluptuous than sensitive. I've never found in them the same gentleness of manners and tenderness as among us. And finally, I couldn't see the King of France without being seized with love for him, for he represents all that I have lost. Then, knowing he is ravaged by fever and stomach troubles, I brought him this milk and these fresh greens. He was severe with me because he doesn't know the depth of my feelings and because he is too holy to understand my case. But I do not wish to carry back my modest gifts. If you are good, Sire, you will keep the milk and greens and have them served to him without his knowing it. You must, if the health of your King concerns you."

"I shall try," said Joinville. "You are an honest man, if one can be outside the true religion, above all, when having known it you left it because of profit and not because of fear. Think of your soul and return to us."

"I have not," said Ali-Eddin, "strong enough faith. And I must admit I'm too strongly attached to the goods of this world."

While the Christians were at Mansourah, Ali-Eddin sought every occasion to see them and talk with them. One day he was in a courtyard surrounded by walls where the Saracens held many knights and others pris-

oners. The Emirs, ignorant or pretending to be ignorant that the King had paid the ransom of all the captives, had them come out from this enclosure one by one, asking of each, "Will you renounce your faith?" Those who refused were taken aside and had their heads cut off. Those who consented were conducted in the other direction.

Now, Ali-Eddin could not help despising these, although he had done as they had. But he admired those who preferred death to renunciation in spite of himself and felt a deep pity for them. And every time a Christian was questioned Ali feared equally lest he be coward enough to save his life or courageous enough to lose it.

Soon the sight became unbearable. He sought out the Sire Joinville, learned of the treaty concluded by the King, reported it to the Emirs, and in this manner was able to deliver the greater number of prisoners.

The King was told of it. He would not see the renegade, but he spoke to the Sire Joinville.

"This man, evidently, is not yet hardened in sin. His charitable act makes me hope that God will accord him the grace to detest his renunciation."

This remark was borne to Ali, who was deeply touched by it.

"What a great joy to me that the King of France could think of me without anger!"

Meanwhile the Christian knights indulged in martial exercises every day in a space near the city. Ali looked on at these whenever his business permitted. He never tired of such spectacles and he was pleased to say that the French were more skilful than the Saracens.

To the Christians he sold cloths, perfumes, pieces of armor, religious objects, always at a low price. And he listened to their conversations for the delight of hearing the names of cities and streams of his country and the sound of his native tongue.

One day some young knights pricked by the lustiness of their blood complained to him that they could not easily in this strange land procure women for their pleasure. The renegade, who had lost the fear of God, pitied them for this privation, which had they endured it, would have turned to the profit of their souls, and obligingly obtained what satisfied their evil desires.

But as three of them were discovered in the act of sinning, the King ordered that, garbed only in their shirts, tied together by a cord, they be led by the companions of their acts through the camp, a sentence which the three young men submitted to with less shame than concealed mockery, for their leaders were beautiful girls.

The King knew of the complaisance of Ali and was deeply angered. When Joinville told the renegade this he showed the sincerest grief.

"Woe is me!" he exclaimed. "I didn't know it was so criminal. The Turks think lightly of such a thing, and I suppose my soul is partly Turk. But the anger of the King distresses me, although I don't know why."

Some days later, Ali-Eddin disguised as a beggar, attended the mass celebrated every morning with open doors in the King's apartment, to which were admitted all comers so long as there was room.

The King prayed with piety so ardent that his coun-

tenance was illumined; he seemed to be angelic in beauty.

Ali was near one of the doors. He gazed at the King with fixed stare. Then as there followed the ceremonies of the mass that he had not witnessed for so many years, he began to recall the motions and the prayers of his church of Provins and of the country of France.

As he was leaving, the King recognized him in his disguise as a beggar.

"Gautier de Provins," he asked, "do you wish to return to us?"

"Sire," Ali replied, "I do desire it, but I cannot—yet."

"Sire," Joinville interposed, "this renegade is not deceitful. If you promise to support him and defend him against insulting remarks I am certain that he will enter with his whole heart into the bounds of our Holy Church."

"That would be too easy," said the King. "His return must be a sacrifice; otherwise it would be worth nothing. Gautier de Provins, do you still fear poverty and insults?"

The renegade answered nothing. He thought of his treasures, of his wives, of his garden, of his sumptuous home.

"Poor man!" said the King sadly.

King Louis moved to Cæsarea, then to Jaffa, then to Sayette, and in all three cities he built great fortifications.

The renegade followed him everywhere. He se-

cretly made arrangements with the contractors of materials and obtained fair terms for the King.

His greatest delight was to get a glimpse of him at intervals from afar, for he dared not approach him. And he was not aware that his actions began to arouse the suspicions of the Saracens.

At Sayette "the King had the bodies of the Christians killed by the Saracens buried. And he himself carried the corpses rotting and smelling to place them in the earth in the trenches without holding his nose, although the others did hold their noses."

Ali-Eddin saw this and marveled at it all the more since he was especially sensitive to sweet odors, to delicate touch, and to all the delights of a soft and sumptuous life.

When the King at the port of the city of Acre was ready to enter the ship to return to France, Ali-Eddin appeared before him.

"You, Gautier de Provins?" asked the King. "Do you wish to come with us?"

Ali kneeled.

"Sire, I beg of you, before you depart, to tell me that you are not displeased with me."

As he finished these words, he was pierced by an arrow. He fell back upon the stones. The arrow had been shot from a house near the quay by a suspicious Saracen who for days had spied upon the renegade and could not bear to see him on his knees before the Sultan of the French.

The King bent down above Ali-Eddin, saw that he was dead, and made the sign of the cross.

"Let us pray. The King of France will never deny the renegade killed because of him. This man feared poverty and reproaches, but he did not fear to expose himself to death. Doubtless this is the best thing that could happen to him. May his blood wash out his renunciation! And may God receive his disturbed soul!"

ON THE MARGIN OF THE DECAMERON

THE LATER STORY OF GRISELDA

DIONEO had finished the story of the Marquis of Saluzo and of Griselda.

"There's a sequel to that story," said Filomena.

"You must tell it to us then," said Fiametta.

"Willingly," said Filomena.

"So after having tested his sweet wife as you have just heard, after having taken away her two children, after having sent her back to her own village, then having recalled her to serve as waiting-woman to the young princess he pretended to wish to set in her place, the Marquis Gualtieri de Saluzo, at last satisfied by the submissiveness of Griselda, seated her at his side and said:

" 'It is time, Griselda, that you receive the fruits of your long patience and that those who consider me cruel and brutal know what my secret intention was. I wished to teach you the virtues of a married woman and to assure my own peace in the future. With this thought, I have caused you a thousand vexations. But the outcome covers you with glory and fills me with satisfaction. And I joyously take back the bride whom I unworthily sent away.'

"At these words, he advanced to embrace her. But Griselda turned away.

" 'My friend,' she said, 'the injurious words with which you so often humiliated me, the seizure of my

son and daughter, your repudiation of me, and the services you forced me to pay to your betrothed, all these were merely tests?'

"'Yes, my dear Griselda; and in the midst of all the injustices I feigned I never ceased to love you.'

"'Very well, then,' she replied. 'I shall respect you always as my master. But now, I no longer love you.'

"And her sweet little face suddenly displayed an expression of coldness and hardness.

"'What?' exclaimed the Marquis, stunned with astonishment. 'You speak thus, just when I'm doing you justice, when I replace you in all your honors, when I'm as determined to please you as I was to torment you?'

"'I love you no longer,' repeated Griselda.

"'That's impossible,' resumed the Marquis. 'You were so mild when I pretended to be cruel; it's impossible that you should repulse me when I display my real feelings and when I explain that it was nothing but pretense and for your own greater good.'

"'And it's exactly because of that,' said Griselda, 'that I can no longer love you. I endured everything from you without taking away my heart because I believed that your caprices and your cruelty were sincere and that they were nothing but the effect of your black temper or perhaps some disease of your spirit. But that you should consider me a creature of so little consequence that you should try experiments on me—that's what I can't pardon. Oh! I didn't deceive myself! I was always aware that I had been a peasant, that I should be toward you the most grateful and the most humble of wives. But I was your wife, and you

should not have vilified me by making me the butt of your lordly curiosity; for it was making vile what belonged to you; and you were doing wrong to yourself. The deceit of the tests to which you subjected me is more shaming to me than the tests themselves. They offended me more than your jealousy or faithlessness would. No, my Lord, I love you no longer. But I am still your wife and owe you obedience as before. After what I've been rash enough to say to you, kill me if you will, but quickly. If you prefer that I return to my parents, I shall gladly. But if you want me to stay, I shall stay.'

"'Stay,' said the Marquis.

"He could find nothing else to say to her. He might have beaten her, but he felt that it would be useless. He hurried away and went to meditate in his gardens.

"He passed through his memory the remarks of Griselda, but did not understand them completely. He despised women, believing all of them feeble and false. When he had acceded to the desires of his subjects that he marry and had chosen the shepherdess Griselda because of her air of simplicity and mildness, he had been careful to warn her; he had asked her 'whether she would always force herself to please him and never be troubled or amazed at anything he might say or do,' and she had answered him yes. She had kept her promise; he had rewarded her by recognizing her again and most solemnly as his wife. What had she to reproach him for?

"He became irritated at the unknown and peculiar Griselda who had just been revealed, against this rea-

soner with the mild voice who continued to carry out the pact to be obedient and submissive, but who kept her heart for herself.

"He had given little thought to that heart of hers before this, satisfied if he had in his wife an excellent servant, but now that she refused to give it to him, he desired it above all things. And the tiny immobile and cold face of Griselda, at once docile and rebellious, he could not dismiss from his thoughts.

"As he paced about he made such swinging and energetic motions that the white peacocks who strutted through the gardens flew awkwardly off with hoarse cries at his approach.

"During supper he did not speak a word to Griselda, but he never stopped staring at her calm brow beneath her golden hair, her eyelids obstinately lowered above her eyes, and the grave line of her rose mouth.

"He followed her into the bedroom and seized her in his arms with more ardor even than in the first nights of their marriage. She did not resist him, but she remained as motionless as a corpse.

"From then he let her live her own life alone as she pleased in her apartments.

"Soon, Griselda began to perform with much grace all that befitted a rich and noble lady. In the mornings she visited the poor. Afternoons, she gave dances to the sound of violins, or she visited among the lords and ladies of the neighborhood. All admired the cleverness and gallantry of her conversation and considered the Marquis fortunate in possessing so intelligent a wife.

"The Marquis sometimes attended these assemblies.

But he stayed only a short time, for he was not a great talker nor expert at gallant repartee. Then he suffered because of the freedom of wit in Griselda and her quiet enjoyment.

"One day during some music, a minstrel named Ogier, who was attached to the household, sang a love song by which Griselda appeared strangely touched until there shone in her eyes a fire never before seen by her husband.

"He watched her for several days, and found her restless and dreamy. He was jealous. He consumed himself in chagrin, vainly mortified his body by rides and hunts, yet he could neither sleep nor eat.

"One night he decided to enter his wife's chamber. He did not dare, but he strained his ear against the door and heard Griselda singing in a dying tone the love song that a few days before had moistened her eyes.

"He thought of having the minstrel Ogier hanged, but he realized that this would teach him nothing. He then had him spied upon by one of his squires, a man in his confidence. The squire first discovered the chambermaid Ginetta delivering a message to the young minstrel. Soon, when Ogier had taken off his doublet to play tennis the squire had no difficulty in finding the note in a pocket. He read it, replaced it, and reported to his master. In this note, Griselda invited Ogier to come to her room the next night by mounting a cord ladder that she would let down from her balcony.

"In former days the Marquis would have killed the Marquise, the minstrel, and the chambermaid without

any questioning and then consoled himself quickly. But now, because he loved Griselda so much, even in detesting her, he wished to surprise and confound her before killing her.

"Night came. He waited beneath the balcony, his soul tormented by the pictures he formed of her long loosened hair and her little serious mouth kissed by the minstrel. He saw the ladder; he saw a man mounting.

"Then he went into the castle, ran to the chamber of the Marquise, was astonished to find the door open, and entered, sword in hand just as the maid Ginetta dressed in men's clothes reached the top of the ladder and jumped to the floor of the room.

"At the same time Griselda approached him, saying, 'I was expecting you, Sir; Ogier and Ginetta have been acting at my orders. I beg you to spare them. And now pardon this innocent ruse of your loving and faithful wife, who throws herself on your mercy.'

"She offered herself with girlish grace. But the Marquis was not so swift to open his arms.

" 'Oh, Griselda,' he said after a silence, 'why have you so much wit? What has become of your ingenuousness and your mildness? And why have you altered the idea of you I treasured, an idea of a defenseless lamb or dove?'

" 'I have done nothing, my Lord, but test you in turn—and only lightly, too—as you so sorely tested me.'

" 'Don't say that, Griselda. I pretended to send you away, but not to betray you while you were my wife. You have been more cruel.'

"'I can't agree to that, my Lord; and besides, you began it.'

"'Even if I was mad, you needn't be vindictive.'

"'Just because I have been vindictive I can see now that your heart is softened.'

"'True, O Griselda. I am changed indeed; I no longer know myself.'

"'Well, then, let us forgive each the other, and have pity each for the other. That's a kind of love.'

"'Our reconciliation has a touch of melancholy.'

"'Feelings in which there mingles some sadness are more lasting than others, my Lord.'

"And weeping they embraced."

ON THE MARGIN OF PANTAGRUEL

PANURGE MARRIED

PANURGE, having consulted dreams, Virgilian fates, the sibyl of Panzoult, Nazdecabre, Raminagrobis, Her-Tripa, Hippothadée, Rondibilis, Trouillogan, Bridoye, and Tribomlet to learn whether he should marry and having received nothing but obscure, equivocal, and fallacious replies, went to visit the oracle of the divine Bottle, which answered him in the simple word, "Trink!"

"That's clear!" said Panurge. "That evidently means that I should continue to drink, and even more than usual, and that I'll find in wine more light than in the minds of poets, sorcerers, theologians, philosophers, judges, doctors, sages, and fools."

"You're right, my pot-belly," said Brother Jean des Entomeures. "But there was no need of going so far to hunt for an answer that good sense would have given you. It's true that we've had a good journey and seen strange marvels. Even so, the way was more interesting than reaching our destination, which is the usual thing down here."

They returned to the land of Touraine. Pantagruel gave Brother Jean an abbey of good repute and Panurge a little house surrounded by vineyards on the bank of the Loire.

Panurge, partly to obey the oracle of Badbuc, partly to satisfy his natural taste, passed nearly all his time in drinking at a cabaret in the neighboring village,

sometimes of that red wine of Bourgereil which smells of raspberries, sometimes of that white wine of Vouvray which to its last drop smells of the press and the vineyard and which even in bottles goes on living its own life, feeling the influence of the skies and the seasons, by turns dry and sweet, sparkling or still, as its mother the vine on the stony soil bears her flowers or grapes.

The taverner had a daughter, Javotte, stuck-up, with high color and strong body, but simple of speech, modest in behavior, and apparently as ignorant as the babe just born. Panurge loved her and made known his feelings. Javotte, knowing that he was prosperous, played the innocent to lead him to an honest proposal. Wine softened Panurge's heart. Then he hoped for a thousand delights from this abundance of flesh and a perfect conjugal security from this simplicity. He proposed marriage. Javotte and her father consented, thanks to the little house and the vineyard. Panurge and Javotte were united in the chapel of the abbey. Brother Jean delivered a harangue embellished with Ciceronian metaphors, and spoke to Panurge after the ceremony.

"Well, my son, you wanted this! From now on, I answer for nothing."

The wedding feast was joyous with incredible eating and drinking. Javotte suddenly appeared worldly-wise and from the chitterlings on displayed an unexpected abandon.

Now, Javotte was a holy touch-me-not who from her girlhood had refused nothing to the sailors and travelers who stopped at her father's inn.

From the very first Panurge had had his suspicions. He put a good face upon it and never ceased wondering, before Brother Jean, about the delicious ingenuousness of Madame Panurge, adding that she was the only woman of her kind in all France, Orleans excepted, and that he had had the good fortune to chance upon her. But at the bottom of his mind, he was not at ease.

One day, he left the cabaret early and returned home unexpected. At the door of the bed-chamber, mixed with the voice of Javotte, another voice—not a woman's. Then he reflected.

"Shall I go in? If I do, I shall expose myself to blows. Let's see; if I don't go in, my dishonor which is only beginning at this moment, doubtless will be completed."

And because jealousy blinded his common sense even to the point of giving him courage, Panurge entered. He saw that his wife's companion was Brother Jean. From all appearances the friar had not come to pray.

I should offend your modesty if I were to repeat all the furious insults with which Panurge saluted Brother Jean, and the jovial insults with which Brother Jean replied. Javotte crept into a corner of her chemise. Panurge wanted to beat her, finding there less danger than in beating the friar; but the latter, seizing his staff, began to belabor the shoulders of Panurge who cried so lustily that Pantagruel, who happened to be passing, came in and asked what was going on.

He was told.

"Let's drink, first of all," he said.

"Willingly," said Brother Jean.

"Same for me," said Panurge.

Javotte put on her skirt, brought the wine, and filled the goblets.

"What has just happened," began Brother Jean, "couldn't be avoided, and Panurge has done it to lots of others. I drink to his health, for I have nothing against him."

But Panurge refused to see the justness of Brother Jean.

"Certainly, I'll drink," he said, "but not to the health of this cursed monkster. See, I'd only ask that somebody draw his soul from his body as one draws water from a well; that is, by a rope! What I mean, let him be hanged high and tight for having committed the hateful sin of adultery, all the more hateful by a man of the church; item, for having betrayed his faithful and courteous comrade (I mean myself by that) and devilishly horned a head that should have been sacred to him."

"Oh, ho!" said Brother Jean. "The selfish heart, who complains because I took a little pleasure with his wife! What wrong have I done you, my pot-belly, and besides, didn't I warn you of it on the day you were married? Now in my turn I demand that Panurge be whipped in all the squares and crossroads of the good city of Chinon for having so miserably treated his wife that she had to seek consolation elsewhere; item, for having tried to beat her with a violence unworthy of a Christian and a gallant man."

Pantagruel emptied his goblet and spoke with toleration.

"Certainly, Brother Jean is guilty, for more than

layman, a cleric must observe continence. And Brother Jean has aggravated the case by making use of the wife of a friend when there are so many tidbits in the village to whom he might have turned, if not without sin, at least without betrayal. But I can't forget that, on the other hand, Brother Jean has his virtues. He heroically defended, all alone, the gate of our good abbey Seville, and in all occasions both on land and sea, in battle and tempest has been constant and brave. Moreover, he is good. In his liveliest jokes he wants only to be gay and to make others gay —never to harm anyone or to cause any suffering. Now courage and goodness are perhaps no less virtues than modesty. A pagan philosopher would say that they are more useful to men. Not that one should encourage debauchery; it might end by hardening our hearts and making us melancholy and cowardly. We also know that good customs, guardians of the family, are likewise the props of the State. But finally we see that Holy Church herself, knowing human nature, is not without pity for the sins of the flesh, provided we show some remorse, but she reserves her bitterest reproaches for wickedness, avarice, deceit, and impiety. We shall be guided by her, and absolve Brother Jean on condition that he does not boast of his sin."

"I can't boast of it," said Brother Jean, "for it was too easy and required no effort. But for all that, I'm not worried. Haven't I holy indulgences? I sell them. I'll give myself one of them."

"Don't laugh," said Pantagruel. "Leave that to the scoffers. Certainly it is impious to believe that you can wash off all sin by giving some sous to the friars,

but it is an excellent thing to consider that all living and dead Christians form one vast family in which the merits of some can make up for the faults of others, for their belief in the support that the saints give them and their gratitude is the beginning of virtue."

"But," objected Panurge, "if you pardon this duffer for so great a crime, what will you do for me, the innocent victim? At least you'll give me as damages some sack of good Parisian crowns or add some honorable corner to my little vineyard?"

"Not at all," replied Pantagruel. "You're unfortunate from your own fault. Even if you deserve no more misfortune than has come in the natural course of events, you still don't deserve any damages. You chose your wife viciously. A wise man would have sought a girl 'issue of people of property, instructed in virtue and goodness, frequenter of good company only, loving God and fearing to offend him by transgressing his divine law, which rigorously forbids adultery and orders a woman to cleave only to one man, to cherish him, serve him, and love him only after God.' But in Javotte you considered only the delights of her corporeal frame; in marriage you sought nothing but assured and comfortable lechery; you saw in this venerable institution, not the union of two hearts and two souls, and the duty and the delight of bringing up children in goodness, but the advantage of always having under your hand a willing bit of flesh. The idea that you had of marriage predestined you to the accident you're complaining about. Marriage is too serious for you; you're unworthy of it. All husbands are doomed to be cuckolds, but not to be deceived; that happens

only to husbands who hoped their wives would be faithful. Such is not your case, Panurge, and you can't put any faith in such a wanton as this pretty Javotte appears to me. So then, we may say that Brother Jean did without doubt cuckold but not exactly deceive you."

"That may be," said Panurge. "But the method is the same, and it's the method that displeases me."

"My lord," said Brother Jean, "you are too severe on poor Panurge. I see his nose wrinkling up; he is close to crying like a calf."

"And I've not said everything yet," resumed Pantagruel. "Panurge has no virtue. He believes in God feebly. He has neither probity nor courage. But ordinarily he is gay and clever in foolish inventions. For me he is a symbol of Mockery and Irony, who are quite wicked things if one makes too much of them, but for whom it is good that the sage reserves a little place, for fear of dogmatizing too narrowly. Finally, Panurge has always shown towards me a kind of affection for which I'm grateful. So I shall never refuse him my friendship. It would be quite unjust to despise him or care less for him because he's a cuckold. I've told him the truth; but just as in spite of all his lechery I liked him, so now in spite of his being a cuckold, I like him."

"Many thanks!" said Panurge with a grimace.

"As for you, my girl," said Pantagruel, turning toward Javotte.

But at this moment Javotte moved by the speech of Pantagruel even though she could not understand it, and touched by the sight of Panurge downcast for the first time, threw herself at her husband's feet and

groveling against him with a thousand caresses, she cried that she was a wretch but not without a heart, that she had as much religion as the next one, that people would see it, and that from now on Panurge would be the happiest of men.

"Who knows?" said Pantagruel.

"Let us drink!" said Brother Jean.

ON THE MARGIN OF DON QUIXOTE

DULCINEA

AT two leagues of the town of Argamasilla, birthplace of that Don Quijano who became illustrious under the name of Don Quixote, there lived in the hamlet of Toboso, one Aldonsa Corcuelo, daughter of good comfortable laborers. She was, as Cervantes says a "pleasing villager." She did not know how to read or to write, but she had native wit, good sense, and an excellent character.

Intercourse between the two villages was not frequent, so Aldonsa was ignorant of the departure and the outlandish actions of Don Quixote, when she went one day to Argamasilla on an errand. On the road she met Theresa Panza, whom she knew slightly.

"I salute you, Lady Dulcinea," laughed the wife of Sancho.

"Why," returned Aldonsa, "do you call me by a name not given me in holy baptism?"

"Because the master of my husband has rechristened you," said Theresa.

And she told the young girl that Don Quijano, their neighbor, had made himself a knight errant under the name of Don Quixote, that he had chosen Sancho for his squire, and that he had chosen Aldonsa for his lady and had given her the name of Dulcinea del Toboso.

"But why did he choose me?" asked Aldonsa. "Does he know me?"

"He saw you at Toboso when you were sixteen years

old, and he began then to be in love with you. But he doubts if you noticed it, even if you ever looked at him."

"I don't remember," said Aldonsa. "But, Theresa, whatever is a knight errant?"

"The lord Don Quixote says it's a knight who wanders through the world defending those whom others have wronged."

"Not a bad thought," said the young girl.

"He also explains," continued Theresa, "that a knight errant should fight evil princes, giants, and magicians, and force all he meets to proclaim that there is no fairer dame than the lady of his thoughts."

"That—that's nice."

"Finally, he says that a knight errant should conquer kingdoms. He promised Sancho to make him governor of a province."

"At least," said Aldonsa, "the lord Don Quixote has a good heart."

"In truth, he's the best of men. Wise, with it, and speaking better than the priest. The pity is he hasn't solid judgment. To begin with, he had himself fitted with arms by an inn-keeper. Then he got himself beaten by mule drivers that he tried to make acknowledge you, Lady Dulcinea, as the Empress of Manche."

"The poor fellow!" said Aldonsa, touched.

"After that, he took some windmills for giants, a tavern for a castle, a shaving basin for the casque of a certain cavalier of olden times, by the name of Mambrin, and twenty other extravagances that cost him God knows how many affronts. Finally, he has retired to the desert of Sierra to weep at his ease over your hard-

ness and to atone for the crime of having displeased you."

"How can that be, since I never saw him and he made me his Lady without telling me?"

"I don't know, my child. But Sancho told us all this several days back. His master charged him with a letter for you . . ."

"Why didn't he deliver it?"

"Because he lost it."

"I'm sorry for that," said Aldonsa.

"Oh!" said Theresa, "that's not much of a loss. Sancho remembered some sentences that we couldn't understand at all. You see, the poor knight has his brains addled by some old books called romances of chivalry, because they are tales of cavaliers. The priest, Pero Perez, and the barber, Master Nicholas, made a huge bonfire of them the other day."

"What was in these books?"

"Silly things."

"And they burned them all?"

"Master Nicholas, I believe, kept some to amuse himself with laughing. For they're only foolishness."

"Would he lend me one or two?" asked Aldonsa, blushing. "The barber in our village—he's a clever man—will read them to me."

"Well, if that's your wish, let's go to Master Nicholas."

Aldonsa returned to her parents thoughtful. Master Nicholas had entrusted to her *Amadis of Gaul* and *Don Belianis*, both spared from the bonfire by the Curate Perez. And on Sundays she had the barber of Toboso read passages to her.

As she was a maiden of good sense she did not believe in the miraculous exploits nor the enchantments recited in the stories. Most of the conversations were incomprehensible to her because of their subtlety and pedantry. At times she felt hints of the nobleness and generosity. In a short time she learned to read, so that she could entertain herself, so much did these printed stories please her. With it all, she remained a good worker and housekeeper. But people noticed that her manners were more polite than formerly, that in talk she expressed only good opinions, and that according to her power she tried to aid those who had been done injustice. Once in defending an idiot she even was struck by stones thrown by tormenting urchins.

When she thought of the adoration the cavaliers poured out, in the books of chivalry, before the ladies they had chosen, it did not appear so disagreeable to be one of them. She dreamed that every day, almost every day, somewhere on the roads of Manche she was being invoked and glorified by a strange hidalgo, with little wit doubtless, but still learned, generous, and brave; and this thought made her smile with less mockery than tenderness.

Without becoming at all coquette or dreamy she became more and more careful of her humble clothes, and at mass on Sundays she was decidedly pretty, thanks to her cleanliness, her becoming dress, and her skill in showing off her simplicity by ingenious but modest ornaments.

One day she went to Argamasilla to find the Curate Pero Perez.

"Father," she said smiling, "I am Dulcinea of Toboso."

"Ah," said the Curate. "So this is you, little Aldonsa Corcuelo? I've heard only good things about you, my daughter. What can I do for you?"

She spoke to him of the Lord Don Quixote, and asked him at length about the character, the habits, and the adventures of the valiant hidalgo.

"You are very curious, my child. Has pride at being chosen as his Lady by this poor fool turned your head?"

"I'm not a fool, Father. But you know yourself that his folly is the folly of a good man; and since it entered his head to choose me as his mistress, it seems to me that I must do something for him, if I can, in using the power he has generously given me over his body. If he comes back some day to Argamasilla, will you be kind enough to tell him that Dulcinea of Toboso wishes to see him and talk with him?"

"It is certain," said the Curate, "that as you are fine and wise, you will be able, God helping you, to have some good influence over the mind of this worthy lord."

The Curate repeated this conversation to Master Nicholas, then to the niece and the nurse of Don Quixote, and they agreed to send the good cavalier to Aldonsa the first time he came back to the district.

This was not long after. It was on the second return of Don Quixote, after the great fight against the penitents who were carrying the statue of the Virgin in procession. He took them for scoundrels kidnapping a noble lady.

Don Quixote had been so soundly mauled by the bearers of the image that he remained in bed for several weeks, clad in a shirt of green serge and hooded in a red Toledo cap. When he was better, he was told that Dulcinea had ordered him to appear before her. She awaited him in her house at Toboso.

He displayed less joy than had been expected. Perhaps, underneath, he felt easier for never having seen the ideal mistress upon whom he bestowed all the perfections. But he was faithful to all the laws of chivalric love.

"I obey," he said, "the incomparable Dulcinea, even though my eyes should be smitten with blindness by the exceeding brilliance of her superhuman beauty."

Aldonsa was waiting for him in the farm yard. She was wearing her best dress, a necklace of coral, a rose above her ear, and in her hair some glass ornaments. And though only a simple peasant with more freshness than beauty, she was pleasant to gaze upon.

Don Quixote arrived, mounted on Rosinante. His breastplate had more dents than an old cauldron; his mustaches threatened heaven; and his eyes emitted sparks beneath the shaving basin that served as helmet and stuck out beyond his imperious nose. And the hero's long legs, his sharp elbows, his lance, his sword, with the legs and the razor back of Rosinante formed a figure as angular and complicated as the monogram of some Spanish grandee.

Sancho followed upon his ass.

Seeing the shining new tiles of the stable, Don Quixote exclaimed, "Behold the magnificent palace of

my princess! Never were Semiramis, Cleopatra, nor the infanta Micomicona so royally lodged!"

He entered the yard and saw Aldonsa on the threshold of her house. Dismounting, he knelt before her.

"Lady of my thoughts," he said, "may I believe that you deign to desire my presence and that the joy is granted me to behold so close your celestial beauty? Be blessed, O queen, for this witnessing sign of your graciousness toward your slave!"

Aldonsa was going to reply, but Don Quixote turned towards his squire.

"Friend Sancho, notice the splendor of her garments, the unbelievable brilliance of her diadem, and that necklace of stones for which it seems the industry of men must have exhausted the mines of Golconda."

"True!" said Sancho, who had learned his lesson and had made up his mind not to contradict his master that day.

"Your words are gracious, illustrious lord," replied Aldonsa. "But look more carefully. My dress is quite clean, but it's only of ordinary linsey-woolsey. These are only glass beads in my hair, and this necklace is only coral and of little price. Look, my Lord. You must look. Your mind, too much busied with great ideas, sometimes makes you see things as different from what they are."

"She wishes to test me, Sancho," said Don Quixote with an understanding air.

"You won't be caught," replied the squire.

But Don Quixote suddenly made marks of the

deepest affliction appear upon his countenance, and spoke as though he had just recalled something he should say.

"Why, O cruel beauty, beloved enemy, must the marvelous castle of your body have for tenant a pitiless soul, so that my heart, torn by the barbs of your disdain, is only a bleeding wound? No longer can I support a life that displeases you; the day on which I terminate it I shall have satisfied both your cruelty and my desire."

"Me? Cruel?" said Aldonsa. "Do I seem so, my Lord? But how could the daughter of the laborer Corcuelo disdain a noble cavalier?"

"She despises my ardors!" continued Don Quixote, plaintively without listening to her. "And yet for her I have vanquished giants, delivered captives and persecuted dames, suffered hunger, thirst, fatigue, and sleeplessness; filled the world with the reports of my labors and equaled the renown of Amadis, Esplandian, and Belianis."

"I know that, my Lord. But rise, I beg you," said Aldonsa, touching his shoulder. "Good. Look at me now, and listen. I am your Lady, am I not?"

"The entire universe has heard it."

"Then you pledge me obedience?"

"Of body, of heart, and of spirit."

"Then, my Lord, haven't you done enough for your glory? So great is it that nothing can increase it. Is it not time to take a little repose? Besides, whether at Argamasilla or in the districts round, you will find occasions aplenty to protect the weak and the oppressed.

My Lord, remain in your village. Your Lady will be pleased. Your Lady commands it."

"Is it you who speak, Princess?" exclaimed Don Quixote with doleful amazement. "To amend the injustices committed in my town, Curate Perez and a few men suffice. A knight is pledged to mightier labors and to the reparation of more striking wrongs. The whole world claims him; universal suffering calls him to its succor. If you have spoken your real thoughts you are not the one I chose; not the irreproachable Dulcinea; as God would not be God if he commanded men to injustice or impiety. Ah! Sancho, she wishes to try me further. Tell me that she wishes to try me. I must believe this, or I shall go mad."

Aldonsa smiled at this. But when she noticed tears in Don Quixote's eyes, she spoke gently.

"Yes, my Lord, this is only a test. I know that Argamasilla is too small a place for your courage. Nevertheless, will you not heed the advice of your Lady? Often your heroism carries you away and makes you forget that appearances may deceive. When you are fighting giants, succoring the oppressed, and delivering captives, would it not be wise to assure yourself that they are giants, oppressed, and captives? I would that your discernment should equal your valor. And then, I shall tell all, though it costs me my modesty. The knowledge of your peril plunges me into concern that you cannot conceive. And when I counsel some prudence—oh! within the limits that honor sanctions—I am thinking not of you alone—but of myself also—for I am weak and I love you."

"What! You deign! O divine grace! O inex-

pressible graciousness! But reflect, dear Dulcinea, that though this timidity is charming in a woman it is not fitting in a knight errant."

"But I don't ask you to be timid, but wise; that is to say, to place at the service of the feeble not only your strength and courage, but the marvelous brain that heaven has given you. You promise me?"

"I promise, noble Lady. For your sake I shall add to the recklessness of Achilles the prudence of Odysseus, even though I have little liking for this virtue of a cleric and merchant. But I wish to show by a limitless submission that I am wholly yours. O sweet Dulcinea, until now I have dreamed that events might lead me to marry, with your consent and without ending your reign in my heart, the daughter of some powerful monarch whose kingdom I had saved. But from now I desire no other spouse than you, and on my return I shall come to sue for that hand that I shall merit by new exploits."

"Good-bye, then, my knight, and remember the words of your Dulcinea."

The curate Perez and the barber Nicholas, hidden behind the wall of the farm yard, had heard this conversation with which they displayed their complete satisfaction. They rejoined Don Quixote and his squire and all four returned to Argamasilla.

"Friend Sancho," said Don Quixote on the way, "it must be admitted that this illustrious princess is no less remarkable for her mind than for her other qualities. The most sublime wisdom shines in her slightest remarks."

"She only said," replied Sancho, "what I've been trying to tell you for a long time. But Your Grace wouldn't believe me because I'm only a poor squire without the soft voice and the rich jewels of Dame Dulcinea. There's none so deaf as he who will not listen; clothes don't make the priest; when the bishop sneezes, it's the word of the gospel; a lie from the King is more important than the truth from a beggar; and the woman one loves is always right."

"It's true, Sancho, that you told me rudely what Dulcinea has just expressed with unequaled grace. That gives me a good opinion of your judgment. In the future I shall pay some attention to your counsel. Or rather I shall not need it. While I continue to wield the lance and sword fearlessly, I shall deign to be prudent and I shall consent to surpass in strategy the crafty Sinon and the shrewd Pinabel, for who can do the greater can do the less."

The curate and the barber were delighted at this speech, for it made them hopeful of the cure of their friend.

But a few days later Don Quixote set out on his third quest in which as is known he forgot his wise intentions. His imagination usurped sovereignty again and he plunged again into incredible extravagances.

Aldonsa visited from time to time the Curate Perez or Theresa Panza to ask after the good knight. But they had no news and the young girl returned to Toboso sadder after every trip.

Now she had put on little by little the behavior of a young lady and there was no lack of suitors.

One day the son of a rich farmer, a youth of good looks, for whom she had a secret tenderness, asked her in marriage.

"My friend," she sighed, "you are aware that the poor Lord Don Quixote has chosen me for his Lady. When he came to see me, he said that on his return he would ask for my hand. I did not reply; but as he has a great deal of imagination he doubtless believes that I pledged him my troth, though nothing may come of it. I would not cause him any pain. I must beg you to wait. How long? I don't know."

At last when Don Quixote, condemned by his vanquisher the Knight of the White Moon to remain idle for a year, returned for the third time to his village, he was no more than the shadow of the shadow he had been.

Whether because of the chagrin he felt at having been defeated, or because the idea of remaining idle so long was unbearable, or because heaven ordained it so, he was seized by fever and took to his bed.

Aldonsa, informed by Theresa, hurried to him at once. She wore the same dress and the same ornaments as on the day she met him.

She approached the bed and dropping into the manner she believed was his continuous fancy, she addressed him.

"My Lord, here is your Dulcinea. She has waited for you, as she will not refuse her hand when you are better. For God will not let Himself be deprived of a servitor such as you, and within a year you will resume the course of your beneficent prowess."

The good knight, whose mind had been cleared by

the approach of death, looked at the young girl and for the first time his eyes showed tenderness.

He smiled and for the first time his eyes showed irony and detachment.

"Alas!" he said. "This prowess was only folly. God gives me grace to see it now."

"Generous folly," said Aldonsa surprised. "If the success was at times doubtful, the principle was beautiful. My heart was touched and my spirit stirred."

"Dear Aldonsa," resumed Don Quixote, "I thank you for coming. If I could have been cured of my visions, it would have been by you. You were the only person who was able to tell me the truth gently. Come nearer, my child. Raise my head a little, for I have trouble in breathing. It will be sweet to die upon your heart."

The maiden obeyed, and a few minutes later Don Quixote breathed his last in the arms of Dulcinea.

ON THE MARGIN OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

THE MARQUISE DE LA TROCHE TO THE COUNTESS DE GUITAUT

June 15, 1677.

YOU tell me that everyone talks of nothing but the fuss between Madame de Sévigné and her daughter, and of the sudden departure of Madame de Grignan, after a five months' visit in Paris, when she should have stayed there the whole year. But, my dear, it's not a question of a fuss; it's something much more complicated, because of the too great wit of these two persons so distinguished. I know this, because I witnessed the comedy almost day by day, since I'm very intimate with Madame de Sévigné and see her several times every week either in her own house or in the homes of her friends.

To tell the truth, it's difficult for a mother and daughter to be so little alike: the one gay, frank, open, her whole heart and mind showing on her round face and in her clear eyes; free, even romping on occasion; the other cold, concentrated, precious in her remarks, and reserved to the point of prudery, fearing to disarrange her beauty by too vigorous movements.

I was there when the Countess arrived in Paris. Madame de Sévigné threw herself on her famished; kisses, caresses, tears, little cries. The daughter was astounded and did not know what to say: "Eh! Now, mother.—Eh! Now." And the other started all over

again, and the daughter backed away frowning, and the poor mother begged pardon while the "Beauty" adjusted her coiffure. Evidently, such transports seemed a little crude to her; though she might wish to be adored, she wanted it to be a little less vigorous.

Their opinions never were the same on any topic. One afternoon, they were talking of epic poetry and the poems of Homer. Madame de Grignan, who prides herself on loving only philosophy and reason, could not hide her disdain for what she termed childish fictions. The discussion grew warm, and the Marquise finished.

"Oh! poor person who does not love Homer! Natural beauty does not touch you; you must have cold steel or small bodies." (You know that Madame de Grignan is wild about the books of Monsieur Descartes —she even calls him her father.) The daughter did not retort, but made her face of an offended goddess; the mother blanched at this, her eyes filled with terror, and she threw herself at the feet of the idol, crying, "You know I'm nothing but a brute; you mustn't pay any attention to what I say."

The same scene an hour later over Monsieur Corneille and Monsieur Racine, and so twenty times a day over nothing, a ribbon, a bow, a patch, the familiarity of Madame de Sévigné with Mongobert, the femme de chambre of the Countess, because the Marquise is becoming a little careless of herself, or she is too fond of the veal hock or sweetbreads, or the little sallies and explosions of good spirits which she cannot restrain. One evening Ménage came to see her—he was once her master of Latin and in love with her—so she made

him her friend and confidant. She kissed him on both cheeks, and as the Countess seemed shocked, Madame de Sévigné remarked, "They kissed that way in the primitive church."

A little later, doubtless to trap her, Ménage said, "I've been your martyr; and now I'm your confessor."

"And I," she answered, "your virgin."

At that, a reproving grimace from the Countess and confusion for our friend who remained silent until some other bit of clever repartee popped into her mind.

I recall one evening when the talk turned upon Marie-Blanche, that infant that her grandmother, Madame de Sévigné had raised so tenderly and whom she called her "puppy" and her "very little vitals." Marie-Blanche is five and a half years old and her mother has just placed her in the Convent of Saint-Mary-of-the-Visitation at Aix with the thought that she will take the veil at fifteen years; for they must relieve the family, which is large, and reserve to the heir of Grignan all that can be saved from the ruin. Madame de Sévigné can't think of her granddaughter without having her heart wrenched. She shows it a little too much.

She said to Madame de Grignan, "Love my puppy. And pity her."

"Pity? She doesn't need any sympathy. She's showing great intelligence."

The Marquise who is so tender a mother stiffens inside at the coldness of her daughter, but dare not say anything. But the Countess is aware of it and resents it. So, besides the little quarrels every day, a thou-

sand unspoken thoughts separate the most loving of mothers and the most dutiful of daughters.

Then Madame de Grignan on this last visit had no longer the freshness nor the plumpness of other days. The climate of Provence, which is severe for her, and her six children in nine years have apparently used her up. Her cheeks are sunken, her voice feeble, her legs are always cold. Madame de Sévigné can hardly conceal her vexation and her worry. Madame de Grignan will not admit that she has been ill. I believe that she is still proud because she was the "most beautiful girl of France." It's partly her mother's fault, for she taught her to believe herself a goddess. Now, a goddess should not be afflicted by illness. When Madame de Sévigné asked after her "poor cold and numb legs," Madame de Grignan felt insulted. The continual, ardent, and excessive attentions of her mother irritate the daughter; and the denials and the air of resignation of the daughter martyrize the mother. Our dear friend gets it into her head that her daughter despises her; and Madame de Grignan considers her mother a little cracked. What a pity! Once, in a calmer moment, Madame de Grignan said to her, "My heart is everything for you that you could wish, but you will not believe it."

Madame de Sévigné replied, "It is what I would wish and I believe it; but I beg you tell me so more often."

With that she burst into tears.

All their friends advised them.

"You two are killing each other. You must separate."

They understood it themselves. The Countess set out for Grignan, and the Marquise sought refuge with me in the country. She writes loving letters to her daughter, receives formal replies, and so it goes.

Corbinelli, who is here, often says to me, "It's all right now. Our dear friend, beautiful, comfortably fixed, with lively blood, widow at twenty-six, might have committed follies. Motherly love saved her by filling her entire existence. It was all the more to her since she was not loved by her daughter; for so, the fear of displeasing her and the continual necessity of winning her kept her love breathless and prevented it from turning to anything else. But, to spare such a love from disillusionment, its object had better be far away: the two hundred leagues that separate our dear friend from her pedantic daughter permit her to adorn her as she will, to worship untroubled this image she has formed, and never to quarrel with the model. We know also that the representation of an idolized object has greater power over the soul than the real presence."

And I say Corbinelli is right.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Grignan, January, 1695.

My dear, here I've been for two months at Grignan with Madame de Sévigné. Our dear friend begged me to come. Without doubt, both mother and daughter in growing old have learned better how to put up with each other; at least how not to make the other suffer; but the Marquise prefers that I shall be between them to soften the shocks and because, as she

says, I have a good nature, that I make the best of everything, and that I'm a good example to them.

The great news here is that the Grignans have just married their son the Marquis to the daughter of the Farmer General, Monsieur de Saint-Amant, who had a commission for foodstuffs at Marseilles. His oldest daughter is eighteen: pretty, amiable, wise, well reared, reasonable to the last degree. They believed such a match good to bolster up the grandeurs of the Grignan line, not without debts. Monsieur de Saint-Amant has given 400,000 francs in cash and more than 50,000 francs in linen, clothes, laces, and jewels. Madame de Sévigné has accepted the misalliance with the utmost calm, as she does all things. She explained it by a stanza from Coulanges.

From Adam we descended are
The proof is very plain.
They drove behind the humble plow
And worked with might and main.
But tired at last of farming toil
We sought an easier boon;
Some idled through the morning hours,
The rest the afternoon.

But the pill was a bitter dose to Madame de Grignan and she showed it plainly. She treated her future daughter-in-law with such haughty condescension that Mademoiselle de Saint-Amant, though refined and knowing, was rendered speechless. Monsieur de Grignan, good fellow but old, ugly, and rather crude, also frightened the poor child. Happily, the young Grignan seemed quite in love with her. But above all, Madame de Sévigné was smitten with affection for

her; caressed her, made her talk, and tried to give her assurance.

The marriage took place on January 2, with great magnificence. All the provincial nobility attended. Numerous visits on the following days. Madame de Grignan, presenting the bride, made excuses and with hints, drawing up her little eyes, said that from time to time one had to fertilize even the best lands. And that, just above a whisper, before her daughter-in-law. The poor child heard the nasty remark. She left the room to seek out Madame de Sévigné, who was outdoors in a summer house. Her friend, seeing her so upset, questioned her, wormed it from her, cried with her; and since all this took some time, Madame de Grignan, after her visitors had left, came out to the garden, spied them under the arbor, in tears in each other's arms, and passed, pretending not to see them. I feared a distressing explanation; but none came.

They only say that Monsieur de Saint-Amant, who had been persuaded to pay the debts of the Grignans, heard the remark, and has turned off the spiggot.

THE SAME TO THE SAME

Grignan, April 19, 1696.

Madame de Sévigné is dead! And in what sad circumstances!

I left Grignan shortly after the wedding. I went back three weeks later. I found Madame de Grignan very ill—a slow fever; she could not leave her room. Madame de Sévigné waited on her day and night and perhaps her anxiety and fear, which she could not re-

strain, aggravated the invalid's condition. Finally, the torment she inflicted on herself, her extreme fatigue, and the overheating of her blood brought on an attack of smallpox. I nursed her with the good Mongobert. Madame de Grignan was all the more forced to keep to her room, for we feared the contagion in her weakened state. But she asked after her mother and when she realized the seriousness, she declared she would see her. When I told Madame de Sévigné, she replied, "I forbid her to come, for she'll get my disease."

I carried this word to Madame de Grignan, who insisted no longer. I then told Madame de Sévigné that her daughter had insisted on wanting to see her, but that her strength had prevented. Our friend appeared to believe me. She merely remarked, "Then I shall never see her again."

She faced death with admirable courage. On the last day when I was alone with her, she said in broken syllables, not looking at me, and as if she were confessing, "Poor Magouelonne! I have irritated her all my life. Because I have no one else in the world. But now I release her. I loved her too much. Often my confessor refused me communion because I was too wholly occupied and centered with her. It was not my fault. Even her faults—I shall answer for them before God. I nourished her with the idea that she was adorable. She was—but she should not have been told. How I have suffered in her. My expiation! I hope I shall not leave with her a bitter memory. We forget what has displeased us in the dead, if they adored us. May she try to be humble. May she love her children—at least a little.—Pauline—the poor Marie-Blanche—

even this little Saint-Amant. It's sad to die so near her—yet so far." She repeated, "So far! Just as all through my life."

She died a few hours later. Naturally, I told Madame de Grignan only part of her last words.

She was buried hurriedly, for fear of contagion. They did not dare to rest her coffin in the church, but they opened a grave covered with masonry. Thus this woman, so brilliant, so vigorous, was buried like an outcast.

I remember that some years ago, the good Corbinelli called Madame de Sévigné the "Mother of Joy." But woe is me! I believe she was more than anything else a Mother of Sorrows.

ON THE MARGIN OF LA FONTAINE

AMONG THE ROBBERS

TOWARD midnight Jean de La Fontaine stepped from a house in the Rue Saint Jacques, where he had supped with some friends. He carried a lantern, for the night was dark, and the city as yet had no street lamps. But as he crossed on the bridge of Notre Dame to reach his lodging a gust of wind extinguished the flame that Jean could not relight, for he had forgotten his flint.

He noticed a man walking before him with a tallow candle in his hand. His Spanish cape was pushed out by a long rapier. La Fontaine set out to follow him and take advantage of the light. But just as they reached the quay, one before the other, the man drew from his pocket an extinguisher with which he put out his light, threw himself upon the neck of La Fontaine, and demanded of him politely but firmly his money or his life, "to pay," as he said, "for the trouble of escorting him."

"Monsieur," said Jean, "I should prefer to give you neither; but since you leave me little choice, I'd rather give you my purse."

He hunted for a long time in his trousers pockets but found nothing.

"Monsieur," he added, "it's unfortunate, but I've forgotten my purse, as you can see for yourself. I'll have to offer you my life, then; but what can you do with the life of a poor poet?"

"Oh! Monsieur, you're a poet?" asked the thief with an air of interest.

"At least I try to be," replied Jean. "But in exploring my trousers I've just discovered that in forgetting my purse and my flint I've forgotten the key to my lodgings. So now I'm forced to pass the night beneath the stars. That's merely a manner of speaking, for I find no more stars in the sky than coins in my pockets. Unless I can find some tavern near here open where I can get credit until tomorrow morning."

"Monsieur," said the robber, "you appear to me to be civil and good company, and you have besides that calmness of spirit which belongs to the wise. If it doesn't displease you, I'll consider it an honor to offer you the hospitality of my humble home."

"Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "I accept most thankfully."

The thief relighted his tallow candle. The two men could examine each other leisurely and seemed satisfied. The thief, clad in a doublet of black satin, borrowed from some rich citizen, with trunks of cloth of Berry and a cloak of serge, had a martial countenance, but without fierceness, in which only the mustache seemed terrifying because of the size of its tips. And Jean de La Fontaine pleased his companion because of his debonair nose, his confident glance, and his neglected dress, for it was certainly that of a poet or a philosopher.

They entered the Rue Saint Denis and examined each other as they walked.

"Monsieur," began the thief, "I honor poets. And I am a poet myself in my careless moments. I began

my humanistic studies at the College of Navarre and at the present time I might have been regent of rhetoric if unmerited misfortunes had not forced me to enter another profession. The one I follow is not the most renowned; but I ennoble at least my leisure by consecrating it to the cultivation of the Muses. Day and night I page through our most famous rimers: Messieurs de Corneille, de L'Estoile, de la Serre, Hardy, Theophile, Saint Amand, Boyer, Chevalier, Cotin, Ménage, and Tristan. As my whim dictates I write rondeaus, acrostics, sonnets, epithalamia, odes, and madrigals. But principally familiar verse. I make songs for porters; and I furnish the gypsies and the cripples all the new refrains with which they make such successes at the corners and in the taverns. I hate to take advantage of the good nature of a colleague who has no reason to be proud of me, but I cannot renounce this chance to be heard by so competent a judge as you appear to be, and if you will permit me to submit some of the fruits of my vigils—"

"Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "I am listening."

The thief, with gestures that made his candle describe wide luminous curves, declaimed an ode on the victories of the King; then the last song he had composed for the gypsy celebrating the joys of tobacco. One could see that the poet preferred his pipe to his mistress.

"Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "the ode is sublime; but the song pleases me more because of its simplicity and its popular tone."

"Monsieur," replied the thief, "I believe your judgment is sound. Besides, I'm naturally so fair that I

pardon those who don't think all my works equal, and who choose among the products of my art. But you, Monsieur, won't you—I shall not say submit to my feeble judgment—but do me the honor to offer for my admiration some of your rimes?"

"Monsieur," said La Fontaine, "after the complaisance of your treatment of me, I cannot refuse so slight a favor. So I'll recite for you a piece that I finished just this morning. In it I've tried to combine tenderness with familiarity, for that is my taste."

And he recited in a low voice a little hymn to voluptuousness, ending:

"Once, Voluptuousness, the mistress
Of the best mind that was Greek."

"Epicure, doubtless?" interrupted the thief.
"Right you are, Monsieur." He continued:

"Disdain me not. Come live with me.
Employed continually thou shalt be.
For cards I love, books, music, love, and folly;
County and town; love in short,
Everything seems designed for sport;
Even dark pleasures of a heart that's melancholy."

The thief remained a moment silent and as though overcome by stupor, then he clucked his tongue several times, took off his hat, and bowing low to the pavement:

"Monsieur, these are verses, true verses, such as I've never heard before. They seem to unclose as easily as flowers. Now I know that I'm merely a pupil, while you are a master. Monsieur, believe that from now on

I am at your service. But won't you tell me the name of the marvelous man who has just revealed to me what poetry can be?"

"Jean de La Fontaine, Monsieur, in turn at your service. But I do not believe that my name can have reached you, for my rimes have not yet been printed. And do you, Monsieur, refuse to confide to me the name of the honorable assassin who shows himself such an amateur of the gifts of the Muses?"

"Monsieur," said the thief, "I shall not hide from you my name—Captain Cascaret. Not that I have the advantage of being the King's officer; but I have my troops, as you're going to see."

The two men, having reached the Porte Saint Denis, and turned to the right, stopped before a good-sized house of plain appearance, built on the rampart.

"Here we are," said Cascaret.

They entered a large room with a low smoked ceiling, poorly lighted by a few candles where several men at tables were drinking from pewter mugs and smoking long Dutch pipes.

They arose as they saw Cascaret. He introduced his companion, "Monsieur is a friend. Show him the best of regard."

Then he spied an empty table and signed La Fontaine to sit near him. A fat woman brought a bottle and two goblets.

"You may speak before Monsieur," said Cascaret to his men.

Then as he called, "Bondrille! La Breche! La Boline! Langevin! Rustaud! Brindestoc!" they came up in turn, hat in hand, to give a report of the

evening's work. Several handed over various jewels, necklaces, rings, crosses, and bracelets, and much gold and silver money among which were many underweight coins; but the chief didn't take time to weigh them, for he knew that his agents had received them without inspection and could not guarantee them full weight. Others brought mantles, hats, pieces of stuffs, cooking utensils, and articles of use or ornament, which Cascaret ordered to be piled in one corner of the room.

"Good enough, men," he said at last. "Tomorrow we'll divide. Go drink now."

Jean de La Fontaine had looked on with amiable curiosity.

"Monsieur," he said to Cascaret, "I admire your skill in ordering such disorder and in carrying out among men I'm sure are beyond the law (no offense meant) a discipline and obedience seldom met in regular society."

"Monsieur," replied Cascaret, "I've never had the slightest trouble, I assure you. Since I've done some studying and since I pride myself on making verses, I enjoy among these men, the reputation of a keen brain and because of that, they obey me willingly. In their way they recognize the mild rule of the Muses. Yet many of them are much more clever than I am. I couldn't tell you all the clever schemes they invent. That one called Bondrille, who only a year ago fenced against the waves with a wooden sword—"

"You mean to say that he rowed in the royal galleys?"

"That is the sense of that figure of speech. Bondrille is one of the cleverest of us all. In the markets,

he appears as peasant; at the Palais as a procureur; among the upper classes, as a gentleman. In every circle if he sees something he likes, he puts his hand upon it at once. That other one, Brindestoc, supplies his companions with sword blades at a cheap rate. He goes into a dealer's shop wearing an empty scabbard, and while the owner is showing him blades he slips one into it. That third, La Breche, is no less ingenious. When he has visited an empty dwelling and filled his pockets, instead of making off at a run, he walks slowly a short distance, then turns and if he sees a crowd pursuing the robber, he passes them and so saves his loot. The fourth, La Boline, puts a dress over his breeches, a shawl over his head, and a mask above his nose. Thus disguised he attacks a man in plain daylight, and the passers-by, believing them a husband and wife quarreling, never interfere. Or at night at the corner of the street he places two mannequins and when a man comes along— But perhaps I'm boring you."

Jean de La Fontaine had dropped asleep. He was awakened by a fracas coming down a wooden stairway in a corner of the room. It was a group of women—Quentine, Parthenice, Amaranthe, Silvie, Nanon, Gillette, Simonette, and Gibouleuse—coming down from their rooms to join the drinkers. Two or three were quite pretty; but all were heavily painted and loudly dressed; some, doubtless after a quarrel, had plastered their faces with patches as long as caterpillars as dressings for their scratches. As they entered, a strong odor of musk spread through the room.

Cascaret, seeing La Fontaine awake, went on with his explanations.

"These are the companions of my men and help them to support what would otherwise be a pretty hard life. Their hearts are faithful, although these partners do not forbid them from sharing their charms—for small sums—with strangers who request it. They help our society in other ways as well. They keep our wardrobe, and they are so skilful in disguising suits we get from citizens, either by changing the linings or the buttons, or turning them inside out, that the owners can never recognize them if they meet them. These good girls live on the floor above, under the care of Dame Angilberde, that venerable duenna you see at the table there with that big red silent fellow."

"That man," said La Fontaine, "shows a face both horrific and amiable. The Læstrygon Giants must have looked like that. Does he belong to your band?"

"That's a friend of the house; one of the assistants to the executioner of Paris. He often does us the honor to come and drink with us. It's useful in our business to have polite relations with the executives of justice, for such persons can save a man condemned to the last penalty by sticking in his throat a tube to save his respiration. They can also put a strip of bacon on the shoulder of a patient before applying the branding iron—"

"All worth considering," said La Fontaine gravely, for his eyes were blinking so much that he did not know to what place he had been transported.

"In a profession like ours," resumed Cascaret, "we must think of everything and use anything we can. But, Monsieur, I have other resources than my slight poetic talent and the things the laws would condemn

under the name of thievery. To me come persons who desire to be revenged on enemies. We keep a schedule of blows with the sword, of blows with the fist, of beatings with cudgels, or simple punches on the nose, all priced at lowest rates. Moreover, we never go so far as killing, for we are humane and prudent."

And Cascaret concluded with a delightful sally of wit.

"I've displayed for you, Monsieur, all my small governance. I administer it with equity which would do shame to more than one judge of the Chatelet and more than one governor of a province. We live as gypsies who buying nothing have all we need. We are in Paris as wolves in the forest. For my part, I try to elevate my profession by as much virtue as it can stand; at the same time I feel myself absolved by the dangers it attracts—dangers not to be laughed at. There is the greatest risk, of death, which ennobles the career of thief and prostitute, as the career of a monarch. In addition, I have the honor of being a free-thinker. Formerly I held somewhat the doctrine of Monsieur Gassendi, but I pushed the reasoning further than that gallant man ever dared. This philosophy suits my life, and my life is justified by this philosophy. Don't you agree, Monsieur?"

"Monsieur, everything, in fact, is relative," yawned Jean de La Fontaine.

He approved everything. An indulgent intoxication swam over his eyes. He smiled at Quentine and at Simonette who had gradually approached and made overtures to him.

"Monsieur," said Cascaret, "if one of these girls has

the honor of appealing to you—you must know that we are far above vulgar jealousy."

"Monsieur," replied Jean in a thick voice, "how can I repay?"

"Easy enough, Monsieur. Become my master of poetry and condescend to correct my verses." *

Jean de La Fontaine passed three delightful days in the captain's house. He got up late, ate well, drank good wine, and enjoyed immensely the impromptu spectacles afforded by the strange company. While the other men were out, he read the verses of Cascaret, even made for him the song of "Dupont and La Guimbarde" and "God Protect Lubin and His Loyal Love"; conversed with Dame Angilberde in whom he found much wisdom; and for the rest of the time, slept.

On the afternoon of the fourth day, as he was alone in the large room, dozing among the mugs, a young popinjay entered dressed in the latest fashion in small hat, huge blond wig, tight doublet, wide collar, huge sleeves, capacious trousers, and an abundance of lace that made him look like a pouter pigeon. The gallant approached La Fontaine.

"Captain Cascaret?"

Jean inclined his chin, not to deceive the visitor but because in his agreeable torpor the effort to speak or even to move his head sideways was too great.

Then the young popinjay explained that he needed the good services of the illustrious Captain Cascaret to bring vengeance upon a man who had whistled away his

* Many of the details of even the phrases of this section are borrowed from a small volume of 1670: *Le Poete Extravagante avec L'Assemblee des Filous et des Filles de Joye: Nouvelle Plaisante, par Oudin de Prefontaine.*

mistress. It was a matter of clubbing his rival, then disfiguring him by some slash. He could be met on such a day at such a time, in such a place, leaving such a house.

"Besides," added the popinjay, "I'll be there, and I'll point him out to you myself, to you or your lieutenants. And I'll pay the necessary price."

Jean de La Fontaine partly wakened by this speech, simply replied, "Monsieur, what you ask is villainous. I'll have nothing to do with it, let me tell you."

The young man might have grown angry if he had not thought it unwise to quarrel with a swordsman of the reputation of Captain Cascaret. He restrained himself, declared he had never been in the fencing academies, otherwise he would not have needed any one to chastise his rival; that he only wanted, moreover, light blows, humiliating, not painful; that he adored his mistress; that he was in despair at having lost her; finally, that he would give Cascaret even fifty crowns if he would consent to become the avenger of an ardor unjustly despised. And at this, he shed some tears.

"My son," said Jean de La Fontaine, touched, "I share your distress; but should you offer me the treasures of Golconda I should refuse to do what you ask of me. My nature rebels at violence, principally in affairs of love."

"If necessary," said the young man, "I'll pay sixty crowns."

"Your plan, in addition to showing so little bravery and so little loyalty seems to be extremely unreasonable. I've sometimes loved without being loved. I

always turned to wine, to sleep, or to another love affair. Follow my example, my boy. You can't force a heart. I have not the honor of knowing your mistress; but I'm sure that in preferring another lover, this charming person has followed an irresistible power. If she really loves your rival, she seems to me not only excusable but interesting and you even should praise her sincerity. If she prefers him because of his courage, or his property, you can say to yourself that she's only a vain or selfish person and doesn't deserve you. Means of consoling ourselves are easy to find if we only know how to look for them. Moreover, you're young, well set up, gallantly clad, and I perceive you have spunk; you can't fail to impress some other beauty who will make up for the trick of your faithless one. Don't say you're incapable of falling in love with a new object. All beautiful women, my boy, bring us the same pleasure, keen but fleeting. It is our imagination that embellishes it, makes it finer and more delicate; diversifies it, magnifies it by anticipation and recollection. A youth like you will find few cruel beauties, or if he does, he'll find consolers not far away. Come, come, my boy, not a word more. Leave me;—I have a great deal of work for today."

And he affectionately pushed the young man towards the door, the latter stupefied at having met instead of an assassin a mild and disinterested man, besides being ravished by his last words, and moreover almost consoled.

But as Jean de La Fontaine went back to his bench he bumped into Cascaret standing with folded arms.

"Monsieur," he began coldly, "I was standing at the

top of the stairway, and I heard all your conversation. I believed you my friend, and here you've just lost me sixty crowns."

"Monsieur," replied La Fontaine, "I am going to hunt them and bring them back to you."

And he stalked out after a low bow.

He entered his home and without delay seized sixty crowns from his chest, fortunately well filled, and hurried back to Cascaret's house. But on the way he met a friend who took him off to supper, then to the play.

Next day he slept late, then went to moon in the forest of Boulogne.

After that he took the coach to Rheims where he spent two weeks with his friend Maucroix.

And so on.

But about three months after his meeting with Cascaret he entered the home of the worthy captain.

"Monsieur, here are the sixty crowns I promised you some days ago."

"I no longer expected you, Monsieur," Cascaret said dryly.

"Did you believe, Monsieur, that I'd willingly do you any wrong?"

Then Cascaret stopped pretending.

"And you; did you believe, Monsieur, or rather, my master and friend, that I doubted your word? And do you believe that I have a spirit so low that I'd accept these miserable crowns? True, you kept them from me, but by one of those well-bred gracious acts whose elegance I wish I could perform. But in exchange, didn't I take from you, so to speak, divine verses that you deigned to sow here and there in my humble

poems? Could I have so mean a spirit as to put in my pouch this silver, no doubt the return for your learned vigils? No; by all the devils! But if you will, let's eat and drink here with these simple men and their good companions."

The whole household made a festival occasion for Jean de La Fontaine. He did not leave until the second day, petted and caressed by all of them, and only then on the promise of returning often.

And he did go back at intervals.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE FABLES OF FENELON

THE JOURNAL OF THE DUKE OF BOURGOGNE

IT is known that Fénelon, preceptor of the Duke of Bourgogne from 1689 to 1695, wrote fables and stories for his young pupil. He gave him these little pieces as subjects for compositions, "But always according to the needs of the time, sometimes to make him realize a fault he had just committed, sometimes to insinuate a virtue opposed to one of his defects." *

Now a scholar has just discovered in the archives, lost among diplomatic papers of the end of the seventeenth century, a book in which the Duke of Bourgogne jotted down his reflections on the fables dictated by his ingenious tutor. The writing is childish but firm. The spelling is often fantastic; we have not followed it.

Here are some extracts from the book.

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January, 1690.

Yesterday I had a stomach-ache after eating too much frangipane cream. To correct my greediness, Monsieur L'Abbé de Fénelon dictated to me this morning a fable entitled "Journey to the Island of Pleasures." It was the recital of a traveler who after having had too good a time in a marvelous island, became disgusted and returned to sobriety. I shall do as he did, but only after I shall have passed some time in that island, where I should like very much to go.

* Works of Fénelon, 1823, Vol. XIX.

I read the description a second time with delight. There were mountains of preserves, rocks of sugar candy, and of caramel, rivers of syrups, so the inhabitants licked all the roads and sucked their fingers after dipping them in the streams. There were huge trees from which dropped cakes that the wind carried into the mouths of travelers, if they so much as opened them. Further on were mines of ham, of sausage, and seasoned roasts, and rivulets of onion sauce. The morning dew was white wine, like Greek wine or that of Saint Laurent.

But there was one passage in this fable of which I never grew tired. "Hardly was I in my bed when I heard a great noise. I was terrified and asked for help. They told me that the earth opened every night at this time to spout out with much labor great boiling streams of foaming chocolate."

In merely rereading these sentences my mouth waters. Monsieur L'Abbé, your fable justifies in advance all my indigestions.

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April, 1691.

It appears that I have an "insuperable pride." That is the way Monsieur de Fénelon expressed it as he spoke to the governor, Monsieur de Beauvilliers. Because of this, Monsieur L'Abbé pretends to depict for me the royalty that will be mine some day, as the most painful of all states. For three days he has dictated stories in which no persons are so happy as shepherds and shepherdesses, where all the queens are old, wrinkled, club-footed, bleary-eyed, with eyes rimmed

with red, and with gray whiskers on their chins. But I know well that all this is not true.

The queen, my grandmother, was not like the queen Gronipote. I remember her very clearly, for I was six years old when she died. She had a beautiful complexion. Monsieur de Meaux himself said so in the funeral sermon he delivered and which I have among my books. He spoke of "that dazzling whiteness, symbol of her innocence."

Speaking of this, I recall a conversation in which some one considered it a merit of Monsieur de Meaux that he dared to say before the holy altar that my grandmother had a white skin. But Monsieur L'Abbé de Fénelon considered it "indecent" that Monsieur de Meaux had introduced a detail of this sort in a holy discourse. It's true that the Abbé detests Monsieur de Meaux.

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April, 1691.

In the dictation today—"The Story of Florise"—there was: "Gronipote took a note that Florise had written to the king and gave it to a young man of the court whom she obliged to carry it to the king, as if Florise had shown for him all the friendship she should have felt for the king only."

I could not keep from smiling when I wrote that. Monsieur L'Abbé asked me why I smiled. I did not answer. I could not very well tell him. "I know well that 'friendship' is put here instead of 'love,' and that Gronipote wanted it to be believed that Florise was the young lord's mistress and he was her lover."

He believes me too ignorant, Monsieur L'Abbé.

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May, 1692.

The dictation this morning was "The Story of Alfaronte and Clariphile." The example of Alfaronte proves, it seems, that the power to make oneself invisible by means of a ring is necessarily evil. Why? The King Alfaronte unjustly killed his wife because, having made himself invisible, he surprised her kissing a young officer, a shape assumed by a fairy. But he could have been visible and still have surprised her just the same with the officer. This story to me doesn't seem to prove very much.

I begin to understand what was meant by a remark made by some one in the King's household: "Monsieur L'Abbé de Fénelon has little accuracy in his character."

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September, 1693.

A few days ago reciting a page of Virgil I read several verses incorrectly and Monsieur L'Abbé made fun of me. I said to him:

"Monsieur, you may correct me, but you should not make fun of me. There are certain persons of whom that's not done."

He continued to tease; I lost my temper, and flung my Virgil in his face. He complained to my governor, Monsieur de Beauvilliers, who himself switched me.

To mark this incident, Monsieur L'Abbé dictated to me "The Young Bacchus and the Faun." The piece is quite jolly, I must admit. Here's a synopsis.

Young Bacchus in a copse is singing verses and in singing makes some false notes. A young faun laughs.

At the conclusion, Bacchus says to him in a proud and angry tone, "How dare you mock the son of Jupiter?"

And the faun replies, "Ho! How dare the son of Jupiter commit such a fault?"

But if Monsieur L'Abbé thinks he has humiliated me by this, he is mistaken. He has admitted that I am the "son of Jupiter"; that's all I want.

But I'm thinking about it. In the fable if I am the young Bacchus, then Monsieur L'Abbé is the faun. That can't be. No; the fable begins with these words: "One day the young Bacchus, who is being instructed by Silenus . . ."

Monsieur L'Abbé is then Silenus? This idea is to me the most amusing in the world.

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February, 1692.

"The Story of Rosimond and la Bramnite" is overlong and languishing. Its moral is: "Oh, how dangerous it is to be more powerful than other men!" Yes, but it must be very agreeable. What difference if it is dangerous?

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June, 1693.

Today Monsieur L'Abbé dictated "The Ring of Gyges." It contains a magnificent description of the gardens of Crœsus.

"When the King walked in his gardens, the gardeners had the art of making the most beautiful flowers bloom in his path. Often, to give him a pleasant surprise, they changed the decorations in the garden as one changes the setting in a theater. They carried away, using huge machines, trees and roots and

brought others; so that on arising every morning the King found his gardens made over. On one day there would be pomegranates, olives, myrtles, oranges, and a forest of lemons. Another day, a plain with pines and huge oaks. Another, meadows spotted with violets, through which coursed little brooks, with willows, poplars, limes, lindens planted haphazard to make a charming irregularity."

It's a fine thing to force nature to obey. When I'm King I shall make gardens like those of Crœsus.

. . . . . .

May, 1694.

At last I made, almost without errors, a good version of a section of the Georgics. To reward me, L'Abbé this morning dictated a fable relating the arrival of Virgil in the Elysian fields, where all the other poets—Orpheus, Homer, Hesiod—were jealous of him, although they were forced to admit the beauty of his verses. Finally to annoy him, Hesiod said, "O Virgil, you have made verses more lasting than brass; but I predict that one day there will come a child who will translate them and so share with you the glory of having sung of the bees."

I cannot be mistaken—I am this extraordinary child. Yes, I share the glory of Virgil—cast a shadow upon him. It seems to me that Monsieur L'Abbé is going a little too far. Too much is too much. Yet he never fails to put me on my guard against flattery!

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September, 1694.

I'm also in "The Nightingale and the Warbler"; "that young shepherd or the unknown god who comes

to adorn the forest." I'm the person who celebrates Philomel and her land. It is to listen to me that "the satyrs and the fauns prick up their pointed ears." It is to admire me that "all the dryads step from the trunks of the green trees."

. . . . . .

October, 1694.

I'm Lycon, too! The "Departure of Lycon" is my departure from Versailles. Because I go to Paris the shepherds in their grief break their pipes, the nymphs lament, and to console them Flora and Pomona assure them that I shall soon return.

But why has Monsieur L'Abbé been so amiable towards me recently? I think I know.

A little group has been formed by Beauvilliers, Chevreuse, and Madame de Maintenon. Madame de Maintenon dines at least once a week at the home of one or the other—just the five of them—the two sisters and their husbands, with a bell on the table so there will be no servants about. They are thus able to converse without any restraint. Monsieur de Saint Simon calls it "the sanctuary" or "the little church." Monsieur L'Abbé de Fénelon is wild to be admitted to this. Now the last time that Monsieur de Beauvilliers took me before my grandfather the King, Madame de Maintenon was there and favored me with many caresses. I don't like Scarron, as they call her, very much. I'm displeased that she succeeded my grandmother. Besides, what is a woman who is the wife of the King without being Queen? But it's to my interest not to displease her because of the influence she has over Monsieur L'Abbé. Then, too, I have my own scheme.

Whenever she speaks to me of my tutor, I spread myself in praises of him and I add that he has a particular esteem for her. She seemed delighted at that. A few days later, Monsieur L'Abbé was invited by Monsieur de Beauvilliers with Madame de Maintenon. He was extremely pleased. And old Scarron certainly told him in what terms I had spoken, for since then he has been spoiling me.

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November, 1694.

I enjoyed the story that Monsieur de Fénelon dictated to me today—the loves of the shepherd Cleobule and the nymph Phidile. The expressions were so sweet and tender that they slipped into my heart I know not what that disturbed me pleasantly and yet made me want to weep. All day I remained as dreamy as the shepherd Cleobule.

Several times I've met in the home of Monsieur de Chevreuse a girl of rank whose name I do not wish to write down. In nature she resembles exactly the shepherdess Phidile. I've tried vainly the manner to let her know my sentiments. But now I know exactly what to do. I shall copy from today's story the description of Phidile but I'll make it correspond to my adored.

Here it is, this description. "The shepherd thought only of the shepherdess Phidile, simple, naïve, with no jewels, to whom fortune gives no borrowed glamor, whom the Graces alone have adorned and embellished by their own hands. She alone was ignorant of her beauty. All the other shepherdesses were jealous of

her. The shepherd loved her, but did not dare tell her."

I shall underline the last sentence. I shall simply sign it, but I hope that my idol will understand. And so Monsieur L'Abbé will have helped me, without knowing it, in my first love affair, which shall be my only one, for it will endure as long as I live.

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December, 1694.

I believe that Monsieur L'Abbé really loves me. I give him all credit. I repent of all my mockery of him. The entire world knows that he is one of the most beautiful characters of our time which has not prevented him from having the bearing and all the manners of a great lord.

His mildness and patience are unbelievable. He desires to please and how he succeeds! Then, he speaks so eloquently of the love of God! With him, piety appears easy and delicious.

But above all, he loves me so much that I am resolved from now on to do everything he wishes.

(*Cetera desunt.*)

ON THE MARGIN OF SAINT SIMON

DAUGHTER OF THE KING

IT was at the time when the King, young and strong in temperament, was still not so fastidious in love affairs as he became later. During a hunt one day he sought shelter from a storm in a gardener's little cottage near Marly. The daughter of the gardener was attractive; the King was pressed for time; she ceded out of respect. The adventure had consequences; there was a daughter nine months afterwards that they called Louise, nothing more, with no mention of either father or mother.

Some time later, the mother died. The gardener reared the child with the aid sent him by Bontemps, the chief valet de chambre of the King, with threats of prison if he dared let out any information. But when the good fellow, her grandfather, died, he told everything to Louise, then eighteen, short, but with a prodigious nose, and resembling the King like a caricature.

The poor child was puffed up over such a birth. But Bontemps put a flea in her ear and she remained silent, living modestly on a scanty allowance provided her, trembling with fear lest her secret escape and bursting with desire to proclaim it.

But as she neared thirty, she complained so piteously of being alone that Bontemps who sympathized with her and who wanted to divert her a little so that she would be more resigned later, told her the King would find her a husband. This was a certain La Queue, lord

of the district of that name, a simple minded moderately well-off gentleman. The maid, who had formed large hopes because of the discretion she had displayed and because of Bontemps' assurance that she would never have reason for regrets, considered the match beneath a daughter of the King. But she ended by agreeing, not being able to do otherwise and because Bontemps promised her that the King would be sure to advance his son-in-law.

He acted in the same manner to La Queue, whispering about the bride's birth, on which he based hopes for a fortune. In fact, La Queue was soon named captain of cavalry and master of camp by commission. But that led to nothing higher. This son-in-law of the King appeared only seldom at court and as the most simple officer and the most lost in the crowd, from which he was too timid to extract himself. Besides he was deterred by the counsels of prudence and at times by the covert threats of Bloin who had succeeded Bontemps.

Meanwhile Madame de La Queue in her village nursed the secret of her grandeur, enjoyed her pew in church and the incense of the priest, relished the curtseys of Madame the Bailiff and Madame the Delegate. At home and even from her husband she required marked respect. She had disguised a cow girl as a femme de chambre, a goose herd as a lacquey, prided herself on her fine manners, and did everything that Molière shows in the Countess d'Escarbagnas. In conversations and visits, by gestures and double meanings, by mysterious winks, and her curiosity about court

gossip, and by a certain manner of passing upon it as though she held the keys to many situations and as though she might be one kept by injustice from her rightful place, by her exaggeration of loyalty and tenderness for the King, her affectation of having his portrait everywhere and those of the princesses, and of making remarks upon her resemblance and a thousand other antics of the same kind, she intimated that if she had the mind she could tell a long story. And as no one suspected her secret, or if suspecting, could not believe it true, she passed as eccentric and a little rattled in the brain.

At the same time, as nothing came to La Queue since his appointment as captain, she began to envy bitterly her acknowledged sisters so grandly married. She vented her spleen especially against Mademoiselle de Blois when she became Duchess of Chartres. She rejoiced at the rebuff that the Duke received from Madame on that occasion, and she told maliciously of the pranks of the princesses, and of the petards they set off one night beneath the windows of Monsieur: all of which she heard from La Queue who got them from one of the Swiss guards, one Courtenvaux.

She went so far in her anger at not being able to disclose what she was, that Bloin had to warn her to keep quiet. But that did not appease her. She reproached her husband for not advancing; he, in turn, accused her of hindering his career by her gossip; he accused her of having made him a dupe; she retorted with the same accusation. La Queue saw no other remedy but to beat her; she cried out that it was an

abomination for a man to lift his hand against a daughter of the King. She would demand justice from the King, her father.

She told Bloin, who came regularly to pay her allowance, that she wished to speak to the King. Bloin staved her off at first with vague promises; then made her understand that it was impossible; and as she would not yield, he threatened her with the convent. She said nothing, pretending to be resigned; but she nursed her own scheme.

By Le Queue she had had two children, the second hardly weaned. One day at Marly, she took her stand early, her youngest child in her arms, beside the road on which would pass the King's coach. When the carriage arrived, she knew how to slip past the guards on horseback and stand in the middle of the road, crying, "Sire, justice!" But the King did not even see this apparition of a crazy woman who looked like him, with her profile that might have been taken from the royal coins. They tried to drag her away; she struggled, and in the confusion, dropped her baby over which the carriage wheels passed. All this was hardly noticed in the noise of the carriages and horses. They told the King nothing about the incident, so he did not know that he had crushed his grandson.

Madame de La Queue went home, the body of her baby under her cloak. She was desperate. But she reflected, and soon turned to devotion; showed a good disposition toward her husband, and kept herself in the background, never even claiming anything more; marked in religion and moreover charitable beyond her means. She lived twenty years in her village, without

ever leaving it, except the day when she met the King on the Marly road.

Monsieur de Beauvilliers who knew the Curé de La Queue told me that he learned from this man that Madame de La Queue had died in the odor of extraordinary piety. According to what he could gather, the pious soul had the idea of expiating the sins of the King by her good words and her holy deeds, by her silence and her modesty during her last years, concerning the secret of her birth. She went so far as to say she had been crazy, that she was only the daughter of a common gardener.

Her other child remained in obscurity. As for La Queue, he was killed in the engagement at Hochstedt.

A RETREAT

> But he escaped from them again, and his life degenerated into ups and downs of great devotion and slackness and libertinage that followed in rotation.
> —Saint Simon, IV, 283.

AT the end of some money troubles Monsieur le Treville, considering the vanity of this life and knowing that only our salvation concerns us, retired for the third time to his friends at Port Royal.

He lodged in the little hotel at Longueville. On the first day he attended the services, which were celebrated at Port Royal with especial punctiliousness and gravity, and for the remainder of the time he meditated in his chamber.

The silence of this solitude, where so many souls had prayed, calmed his spirit and his mind. Then he rejoiced to feel himself free, far from the city, farther still from the Court; and he did not regret being with these persons at whom the King looked askance, this King whom he knew so well since he had been his companion in youth.

On the second day he conversed with the other survivors, Messieurs Lancelot, Nicole, Lenain de Tillemont, and savored the deep consolations of their talk. Their tone of certainty reassured his soul. But towards evening without ceasing to consider them venerable, he

found them old and monotonous, repeating mechanically the things they had too often spoken. Monsieur Arnauld was away, he regretted his verve and brusque humor. It seemed to him that the new abbess, Madame Elizabeth de Sainte Anne was a good woman with no flavor. Where was Mother Agnes? Where the two Angelicas? Continually he had to remind himself that he had come to Port Royal not for agreeable company but for a refuge of prayer and holy practices, and that moreover he had himself aged; he was no longer the Treville in whom people had found as much wit as in Monsieur Pascal.

On the third day he visited the cemetery, stopping at the tombs of those he had most loved. In thought he saw again, weeding the borders and watering the vegetables, the mysterious gardener of the monastery, that English gentleman who called himself Monsieur François who had told his story—more tragic than any related by Monsieur Racine—to Treville. He dwelt long upon his innocent friend, Monsieur Hamon, the doctor, who went about from village to village on his donkey, with a book in his hand, who had to so high a degree a sense of spirituality and a sense of emblems; who believed that only the invisible was real, who wrote four subtle and metaphorical volumes on the "Song of Songs"; and who passed through the world as through an enchanted forest.

Monsieur de Treville knelt for a long time at the tomb of that delicious Mother Angelica de Saint Jean, so passionate and so agitated, for whom he had felt a sentiment with as much profane curiosity and sympathy as honest man dare feel for so holy a woman.

On the fourth day he took from the monastery library the manuscript account in which Mother Angelica de Saint Jean, carried off from Port Royal and locked up with the Annonciades of Paris related her spirited agony. He read these moving sentences: "My soul was not humiliated enough, for I thought only of the glory in suffering for the truth . . . I learned what despair is and how it comes. . . . There was danger that I should allow my lamp to go out. . . . It was a kind of doubt of all things relating to faith and to Providence."

He recalled the pallor of Mother Angelica, her large nose, her ardent eyes, her readiness to weep, and her skill in fashioning small wax figures. He began to love her, though dead, a little differently from the way he had loved her alive. He asked, in spite of himself, what she might have been. At the same time he sought and saw for himself the possibility of combining in one person, without risk of salvation, the faith blindly accepted in memory of the noble characters to whom it had served as sustenance and guide, the play of reason upon the world of appearances, and the taste for pleasures in transitory things.

On the fifth day, the post brought him a small book that had just been published, *Maxims and Reflexions on Comedy* by Monsieur de Meaux. Monsieur de Treville paged through it. The doctrine was austere and the style excellent. He approved the first and was charmed by the second. But little by little the spectacles that Monsieur de Meaux described in order to condemn passed before the eye of Monsieur de Treville

in colors too charming, above all when he came to this passage about actresses:

"Who can regard them as anything but slaves on show, in whom modesty is extinct as the result of the inspection to which they have been exposed, creatures whose sex should have consecrated them to modesty? . . . See them exhibit themselves in the crowded theater with all the helps of vanity, as the Sirens of whom Isaiah spoke, making their home in the temples of voluptuousness; whose glances are death-dealing; who receive from all sides, in the applauses offered them, the poison they spread abroad in their songs."

At this point in his reading Monsieur de Treville recalled the amiable actresses he had known in his youth: Mademoiselle du Parc, Mademoiselle Champmeslé, Mademoiselle Molière. He recalled more than he should, and without that shame fitting to a Christian truly repentant for his early errors.

On the sixth day he strolled through the woods and along the lake. He thought how as a boy Monsieur Racine had walked here. Some poems of love sprang to his mind. Without impatience he pictured to himself the earthly surroundings of those Hermiones and Phedres who had failed to remain virtuous, not because they lacked the "inherent power" but the "saving grace." And smiling he said to himself that at least they had the grace of Venus.

It was autumn. The sun was sinking. The beauty of the light, the reflexion on the water, and the tints of the leaves made upon Monsieur de Treville impressions at once sad and sweet. He thought that he also was entering his autumn, for he had passed fifty. He

thought of old age and death. But while the idea of death when he had lived in the world had turned him to devotion and retreat, this same idea rising in the midst of solitude, aroused a strong desire to return to society.

On the seventh day, Monsieur de Treville ordered his coach, entered Paris, and was set down at the door of his old friend Mademoiselle de Lenclos, who had seen a plenty and with whom he loved to talk idly of one thing and another.

ON THE MARGIN OF THE PROCLAMATIONS OF GENERAL BONAPARTE

STORY OF A MERVEILLEUSE

Fragments of the Journal of
Madame Clelie-Eponine Dupont
(1795-179–).

I BEGIN this journal upon the advice of my master of French and penmanship. I don't know very well how to write nor spell;* he told me this will give me practice.

I was born in 1778. My father was a little grocer in the rue formerly called Saint Jacques. I learned to read—no more—in a school in the neighborhood. My father, in his hatred of superstition, would not allow me to make my first communion and so I never learned the catechism. I was then called Marie Jeanne; he changed these names to Clelie Eponine.

As he was intelligent and advanced in the new ideas, he rose, and became through influence of high persons, a furnisher of supplies to the army. It appears that that paid well. Then, after Thermidor, he still increased his fortune by speculations that I don't understand and that his evil wishers call stock-jobbing. But I can't believe that such actions are not good for my father talks continually of justice and virtue.

When I was fifteen he married me by a civil ceremony to the Citizen Tiberius Dupont, a member of the Revolutionary Tribunal. My husband never made me feel any sentiment except one—fear, although he tried

* The editor has corrected the spelling.

to be gentle with me and often was moved to tears in reading to me from *Paul and Virginia* or the *Idylls of Gessner.*

I knew how to hide my joy over the ninth Thermidor. A month later he was guillotined with several of his associates. It is reported that he died bravely. I admit that I was not much affected by his death. This is because he was to me almost as strange and incomprehensible as though he belonged to another planet.

Then I went back to my father's house, where I lived in all the liberty of a widow. All the past events of the Terror with its blood seemed a bad dream. At times, sudden visions came to me: a head paraded under my windows; meeting with a cart full of condemned; or a red puddle in the Place de La Revolution around which I had to walk. And I knew only one desire—to live, to live madly with all the strength of my youth.

Many thought as I did. Never, I believe, did one have so wonderful a time. Never did one dance so much. In Paris there are six hundred ninety-four public ballrooms to suit every purse, and all crowded.

We dance in what have been convents and churches. We dance in the Rue de Vaugirard, in the home of the former Carmes Duchaux, where the September massacres occurred. We dance in the old Cemetery of Saint Sulpice; and on the sculptured entrance above a Latin inscription that those who sleep there await the resurrection a transparent rose announces the Ball of Zephyrs.

We dance above the dead; but that only makes us enjoy all the more the passing moments.

The émigrés are coming back in hordes. But they are as gay as we are.

By the protection of Madame Tallien, whose friend I have the honor to be, I was able to go to the Faubourg Saint Germain, to the Ball of the Victims, a very select ball to which were invited only those persons who had had some relative guillotined. True, my husband wasn't executed for the cause; but I was careful not to let that out. Besides "Dupont" is so common a name that it could not be denounced; and in short, my face, that they say is passable, arranged everything.

The costume required for the ball was full mourning. The women wore the "coiffure a la victime," with their hair held up in back by a comb, so that the executioner could all the more easily take hold. Some increased their heads by buying the blond hair of victims from the jailers. The rule was to bow to one another "a la victime," by making a movement exactly like the one made by the condemned as he placed his head beneath the blade. Oh, how gay we were!

The relatives of many present had been sent to the scaffold by my husband. But I didn't do any boasting about that.

I heard a dandy in black say to a black clown, "Oh, my dear clown, they killed my father!"

"They killed your father?" said the clown, and he drew out his handkerchief. But the desolate young man had resumed his vigorous dancing.

. . . . . .

We eat a great deal, too. In the evening we take what is called "tea"; but it's a substantial "tea," with

turkey and truffles, bloody roast beef, and all kinds of spirits.

Yet the fashion among women is to pass as spare eaters, to have vapors and fainting spells. They stuff themselves, yet they want to appear pale. There are some, who to prevent themselves from looking too healthy, are bled regularly.

In order to appear more languishing, we have suppressed the *r* in imitation of the divine Garat. To that we have added a lisp. We give our "wo'd of honoh"; we say, "glo'y of wah." We speak of the "voith" of a beauty and of her "anthelic vithathe." In short we twitter like little birds.

On the other hand as we worship the body and as in addition our exquisites must have solid muscles for the continual risks in the streets and for the hunt after Jacobins, the fashion is for Hercules and Milons of Crotone. The fashionable world crowds to the games of hurling the bar in the Bois de Boulogne, to the foot races at Monceau, to the horse races at Bagatelle, to the gymnastic events at the Hôtel d'Orsay which reproduce the sports of the Celts, the Greeks, and the Romans.

We have all become coachmen. Booted and snapping my whip I drive my buggy to Longchamp, where it's not very comfortable for there's a terrible confusion of cabriolets, phaëtons, pony-carts, carricks, demi-fortunes, and hooded-tops, which are our latest carriages.

. . . . . .

I suspect that this society is not very stable. Although I don't know much, I believe it is ignorant and coarse. At the Opera you see charming women of

sparkling elegance; but as soon as they open their mouths, they're lost. You hear "By God!" and "Ain't it swell!" and "Lord! she dances good!" or "It's hot as the devil here!"

If we dance wildly and gorge food it's because no one knows how to talk. Conversation is a lost art.

. . . . . .

Shall I wear today my Spanish wig, my Venus wig, my Aspasia wig, or my Caracalla wig?

Shall I wear my peasant bonnet, my frivolity one, or my Delia one? Shall I put on my Flora dress, or Ceres, or Diana, or Vestal, or the rising of Aurora? What difference does it make? All are equally transparent. The other day, at the end of a supper at the home of the director Barras, a friend of mine wagered that her entire costume, including her rings, anklets, and sandals would weigh less than two crowns of six pounds. And on the spot she undressed and won her bet.

. . . . . .

Rarely have people as today obeyed the laws of nature. Everyone does as she pleases and no one finds anything to criticise. We follow freely all the impulses of our natures. Custom has greatly lightened the yoke of marriage; and from marriage we go on to other things, step by step.

This is the reign of pleasure. Isn't pleasure one of our rights? But the greatest pleasure of all is love. Then how does it happen that since I've been a widow, I've taken no lover? Fine youths have paid court to me, and the masterful embrace of certain arms in the waltz has been more than agreeable. But when it

meant going on with it, I just couldn't. Yet no gothic prejudice held me back. What is it, then?

. . . . . .

At Tivoli I met a young officer of the Army of Italy, one of those young warriors engaged in liberating people, who have accomplished so much under the guidance of the General Bonaparte. Colonel at thirty years, this favorite of Mars has none of the silly affectations of our dandies. He does not lisp, he does not omit his *r*'s; rather he rolls them a little. Free, as I am, of all vain prejudices, he believes only in honor and country. He is a man! I was ravished to see this hero almost timid before me. In his compliments there was a sincerity and respect that touched me deeply.

I saw him again at the Theater of the Republic where they were playing *Quintus Fabius or Roman Discipline.* The sublimity of this tragedy enraptured him. I didn't dare tell him that it bored me somewhat, though it is apparently good.

I met him the third time at the ball at the Hôtel de Longueville. I had gone to some expense to please him. The fashion just now for the "merveilleuses" is not to wear any chemise under the dress (because the chemise drops away from the form, drapes awkwardly, and the fitted dress loses much of its grace because of the unexpected folds of this garment). I was dressed in this newest mode, and I expected a huge success. I obtained it, but not from the colonel. He seemed silent and discontented, and avoided me all evening.

I asked myself why and I think I know.

. . . . . .

Some days later I met him at Madame Tallien's. I was wearing a totally different dress from the one of the Hôtel de Longueville. In addition to having put on my chemise, I had covered at least a part of my chest and arms, and reinforced the light gauze of my dress by a skirt. The colonel showed me the most tender attention.

Love has taught me modesty; and modesty has dowered me with new charms in the eyes of the hero who loves me.

As I left the fête at dawn I saw some kind of shivering phantoms who on their knees in the mud were fighting with dogs over some badly trimmed bones. Under the wheels of a gilded coach a man fell from exhaustion in the street. He had something between his teeth; they told me it was the grass that sprouts up in the public squares.

I gave to these unfortunates all the gold I had with me; and for a moment I was ashamed of being rich, beautiful, and of living for pleasure only.

. . . . . .

At the little Coblentz, which is a section of the Boulevard des Italiens where the aristocrats and anti-republicans gather, I made the acquaintance of an émigrée, the Marquise de X. She had come there from mere curiosity, for she is very sensible and good, and has brought back from her exile none of that stupid pride and vain prejudice of so many other émigrés.

She displayed a real affection for me. She liked, she said, my ingenuousness and my candor. Nor was I provoked at her speaking thus to me, for I felt her my superior in mind and education.

She introduced me to Madame Recamier. It was then I realized fully what the grace and politeness of the former society must have been, and what we newcomers lack.

We went, the Marquise and I, to see *Abufar*, a touching drama of marked novelty. But more than by Talma or Mademoiselle Georges, I was impressed by Madame Tallien who divinely beautiful was enthroned in a stage box. I asked the Marquise her opinion of this celebrated woman. She replied:

"I do not hate her. Much must be pardoned to Our Lady of Thermidor. From the depths of her prison of Carmes she struck down Robespierre and killed the Terror. The Terror was vanquished, not directly by pity, charity, or outraged virtue, but by nature, by the desire to live. Now, Madame Tallien was the heroine of that victory. She is the liberating voluptuousness. Her impure rôle was, in its time and by contrast, beneficial. But perhaps it has lasted long enough. Tell me, my dear child, aren't you sometimes tired of amusing yourself so much?"

I was forced to admit her charge.

. . . . . .

I have pledged my troth to Colonel Aubert. This step has made me reflect. The colonel must leave for Egypt almost immediately after our marriage. In his absence, I want to keep faith with him, and I feel that if I fail, I shall be guilty. What causes that? For after all nature does not impose faithfulness on me. It must be that I have in myself a witness and a judge of my acts.

This invisible judge, it cannot be doubted, is the Supreme Being, the good and rewarding God.

. . . . . .

The other day I was at the Temple of the Theophilanthropists in the Rue Saint Denis. Flowers and fruits on the altars; hymns invoking the Divinity; exhortations to virtue recited by readers in blue tunics in a pulpit with pink drapery; such were the simple and touching decorations and rites of the new religion. I came away strangely moved.

. . . . . .

I have been obliged to spend some days with my father at our country house. I'm writing to my dear friend, and I'll copy my letter here so that it may be more carefully composed.

"This morning I strolled about the garden, I heard the joyous songs of the warblers, the buds are opening, I breathed the balmy air. Ah! I exclaimed, already the lover of nature makes strides; already I feel its delicious influence; all my blood surges toward my heart, which beats more violently at the coming of spring. Everything wakens, everything stirs; desire is born, and courses through nature and fans every creature with its light wing; all are affected, all follow; it opens the way to pleasure, all hasten after. Ah! my peaceful pure heart; if it trembles at times, it is not from fear of loving too much." *

I shall stop here; for I believe now that I can continue my letter without a copy.

. . . . . .

* Letter quoted by the Goncourts in their book on the *Directoire*.

Yesterday I told the Marquise of my engagement to Colonel Aubert. She entirely approves.

Seeing me sad today she said, "I'm afraid, my dear child, that the religion of Monsieur Lareveillere-Lepeaux doesn't entirely satisfy your heart. I have for guide and friend an old priest, good and tried by life, who can easily understand your condition, and who wouldn't frighten you at all. Do you wish to see him?"

I replied that I would—gladly.

. . . . . .

I asked the Marquise what she thought of General Bonaparte.

She said: "Present-day society is at bottom a chaos and in its appearance a saturnalia. It is certain that this carnival, hiding such horrible suffering, cannot last. General Bonaparte has the mark of genius on his brow. Without doubt he is sent by God to reestablish first order in the State, then order in our souls. Meanwhile, to serve General Bonaparte is already the rule of living. For that reason, Colonel Aubert to you seems so superior to the futile young men you used to associate with."

I was pleased to hear these words, not only because of the praise of my beloved, but because, like all women, I adore General Bonaparte.

(*The rest of the manuscript has been lost.*)

THE END

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